CARVED FROM THE WILDERNESS

1867 CANADA 1967 CONFEDERATION

the intriguing story of

DRYDEN

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PREFACE

THE AUTHOR

This story of Dryden's development is basically a collection of articles by George Wice which appealed to readers of The Dryden Observer in recent years. Whatever is lacking in continuity is more than made up by the author's honest record of Dryden's early days described in his own unedited works.

George Wice arrived in Dryden in 1897. He will be 79 years of age during Canada's Centennial Year. Here he records, forever, many of the early events that affected the course of Dryden's development and in so doing acquaints the reader with some of the individuals who played a prominent role as well as some whose presence and behaviour have merely added variety and amusement to the scene.

Publication of this book of Mr. Wice's articles is an historic event in itself for there is no other book available on the subject.

The reader will find this book entertaining, of human interest with amusing anecdotes which convey something of the spirit and character of Dryden's early days. And, too, Mr. Wice's contribution to posterity will provide added purpose and enthusiasm for those in whose hands his generation has placed Dryden's affairs and Dryden's future.

His father was Reeve of the Municipality of Van Horne in 1924 which probably explains why young George followed generally the same course in public service. As a small boy in 1898, George "handed up the boards" during construction of Dryden's first (Methodist) Church and in later years building construction became his principal means of livelihood.

But read on as this kindly, selfless pioneer, one of the last of his generation, tells of the makings of a Northwestern Ontario wilderness community and all the men and women who made it.

INTRODUCTION

Dryden, situated in the heart of Northwestern Ontario on the main line of the C.P.R. and Highway 17, midway between the twin cities of Fort William and Port Arthur on the east and Winnipeg on the west, approximately 220 miles distant from either center, is well known as a vacation land to thousands of American and Canadian tourists who visit it each year. The 1966 population is 6,676.

The Dryden district is a rugged land of great stretches of timber with rocky ridges and scattered farm lands interspersed with marshes, lakes, rivers and creeks. For the hunter it provides both a spring bear season and a fall season for moose, deer, bear and birds. The numerous lakes and streams provide a sport of unequaled variety for the angler. For those desiring a holiday devoid of active sport there are camps where one may swim, paddle or loaf to his heart's content.

From Highway 17 two branch roads lead to the fishing and hunting grounds of the north, one to the east of Dryden connects with Sioux Lookout and one to the west at Vermilion Bay joins with Quibell and Red Lake.

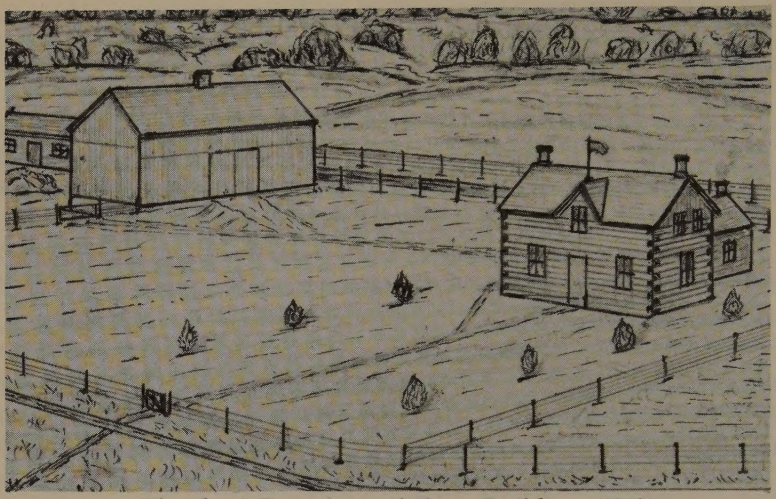
As this story of the early pioneer days in Dryden comes mostly from my boyhood memories and experience in the trials and tribulations of survival in a wilderness where there were no roads or other means of travel to communicate with the outside world except by railroad, I hope the reader will not be too critical if I should deviate occasionally into personal history in order to complete the story of those early years. Time marches on and is taking its toll of our senior citizens. As I recall those who arrived in 1897 there are only ten now living in the Dryden area. They are Jas. Hatch, Alex Hutchison, Mrs. Lila Sawyer (nee McLean), Miss Annie Hardy, Mrs. Vera Richardson (nee Salton), Mrs. Geo. Wice (nee Orvis), Leslie Orvis, Mrs. Elvira McCallum (nee Stevenson), Sam Stevenson of Oxdrift and Geo. H. Wice.

The names and addresses of ex-residents who were also here in 1897 with whom I had contact during the 50th celebration are listed below:

Paul Kennedy, Dr. Harry Hutchison, Ray Orvis and Katie (Reid) Roy all of Edmonton, Alta., Minnie (Orvis) Sanders and William Orvis of Calgary, Edley Orvis, Mirror, Alta., Frank and George Ludlow, Balcarres, Sask., Rose (Shackelton) Mannie, Kelvington, Sask., Ida (Shackleton) Cole, Sioux Lookout, Alice (Shane) Heemamn, Harvey Skene of Salmon Arm, B.C., Oliver Skene, Red Cliff, Alta., Olena (Stone) Dempsey, Victoria, B.C., James Vestrup, Revelstoke, B.C., Alice (Hyde) Cyre, Legal, Alta., Eunice (Smith) Lane, Vancouver, Stella (Smith) Vyse, Langley, B.C., Louis (Smith) Meers, North Burnaby, B.C., Alma (Smith) Clarke, Hazel (Smith) Sneddon and Myrtle (Reed) Merryweather, Toronto, Aldra (Smith) Handly, Cannington, Ont., Bert Annis, Grand Valley, Ont., Clara (Annis) Emeison, Whitby, Effie (Hatch) Padfield, Mount Forest, Myrtle (Hatch) Stieret and Ralph Hatch, Havana, Cuba.

There were also a few farmers located north and west of the village at this time. Some of these were: John Nicholson, John Phipan, Robert Robinson, Fred, Gus and Ferdinand Rodtka and William Beattie.

Early political meeting in the old park.



Sketch of Experimental Farm Buildings 1897.

THE EXPERIMENTAL FARM

It wasn't wanderlust or the lure of gold that caused those sturdy pioneers of 1896-97 to leave the land of their birth in old Ontario and face the hardships and privations of "carving a home in the wilderness" of Northwestern Ontario. If it had been the golden lure they would have left the train at the little village of Wabigoon, at that time booming in the hey-day of the gold rush to Goldrock and the Manitou.

But it was with the hope and ambition to better their condition, get away from the rented farm and become landowners in their own right. They had been under the influence and persuasive ability of the then Minister of Agriculture for Ontario the Hon. John Dryden, listened to his story of how, when as a passenger on a train that stopped at Barclay Tank for water, he noticed clover growing in abundance along the railway track. He got off to investigate and discovered that settlers proceeding west to the prairies were in the habit of clearing their cars of refuse from stock while the engine was taking water. From seed deposited in this way the growth of clover had started and spread. He came to the conclusion that land which would grow clover in such profusion should be good for farming. In order to prove this and open up a new farming area he started an experimental farm in 1894 giving it the name of New Prospect.

EARLY ADVERTISING

The late John Crear, a pioneer in 1896 states in his "Memoirs of a Pioneer Resident" that during the winter of 1895 he received a booklet printed by the Ontario Department of Agriculture containing many pictures of tracts of easily cleared land, nice stands of timber, beautiful islands, lakes and rivers and describing the wonderful possibilities of the area. A booklet was also in the possession of our family before moving to Dryden. Possibly it was a later edition for in it were pictures of the pioneer farm buildings, the beginning of farms in the area with small clearings of land piled with logs ready for burning, and small fields of grain and clover showing the possibilities of the land for farming.

TOWNSHIPS SURVEYED

The booklet told of the Government having surveyed the Townships of Van Horne and Wainwright the previous summer and the start of the experimental farm. I have in my possession an old map of this survey signed by A. H. McDougald, Ontario Land Surveyor, Port Arthur, Ontario, August 29, 1895.

Early Queen Street residence, '97. Wm. Humphrey, Amos Orvis, James McFadyen.

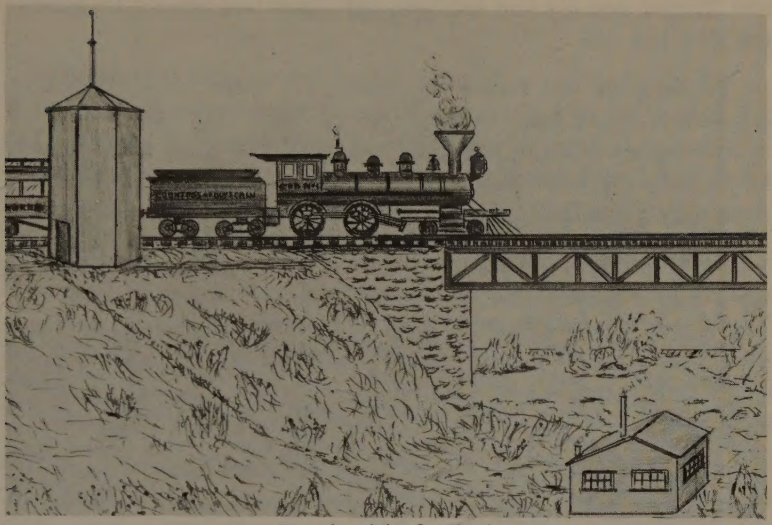
PIONEER FARM HISTORY

The late Wesley Hatch, father of Jim of the Groveside Dairy, in an article, "The Start Of A New Settlement In 1896" stated that he slept in the barn in June '96 for several nights and that Mr. Annis and his three helpers, (Frank Fisher, Chas. Silver and Jim Coote) were established in the pioneer house. Father also told of the farm being well started with a log house and timber frame barn when he returned home from a visit in August 1896. These facts have led me to the belief that the experimental project began early in 1894.

The first superintendent of the farm was Mr. McFarlane who supervised the construction of the buildings and got it under way. He was followed a year later by A. E. Annis who was also appointed Crown Lands Agent. Its location was immediately north of the present C.P.R. station covering the area now known as North Dryden. It extended one mile north including the cemetery and one-half mile east from Highway 17 north, including the Agricultural Grounds. On the map of Van Horne Township it is shown as Lot 4, Con. 6 with a total of 320 acres. The original farm house remodeled by Dryden Smith, father of Baden, was Baden's residence until demolished in 1964, now the site of the Holiday Restaurant and Service Station. The barn was moved in 1909 to a new location about a half-mile northeast from where it was built. It was recently taken down to make room for residential extension and rebuilt near the Groveside Dairy.

CHANGE TO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

Mr. Annis purchased the farm from the Government when it was decided to discontinue its use for experimental purposes. He sold it to Swan Swanson, a contractor on the Grand Trunk Railroad, (now the Canadian National) during construction. Mr. Swanson moved the barn and subdivided the portion south of Swansons' Creek into lots 25 by 125 feet known as the Swanson Subdivision. A local name given it was "Swede Town". After a few houses were built on it Mr. Swanson sold a large number of the lots to construction workers on the G.T.R. who did not complete their payments or pay the taxes. These lots were either sold for taxes or recovered by Mr. Swanson. After a few years he sold the property which he still owned back to Mr. Annis who held it until the time of his death. In the settlement of the estate, his son Bert sold the subdivided portion to Jas. Hatch and the portion north of the creek to the late Geo. Leach.



Barclay Tank 1896

OUR ARRIVAL IN DRYDEN

I came to Dryden as a lad of eight years with my parents, April 26th, 1897, nearly 70 years ago. Things that occurred in those early years remain more vivid in my memory than some of recent date.

We were living on a rented farm near Brooklyn, Ont., and a neighbor of the late Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture. It was due to his influence that father and a brother-in-law, Alvin Orvis journeyed to Dryden in 1896 to look over this new land and see if they could better their condition at home. Mr. Orvis stayed to build a house for accommodation combined with a grocery store on the corner of King and Whyte, now converted into office suites, while father returned to prepare to move the next spring.

In April he loaded a box car with household effects, two cows and a team of horses. To save a few dollars to help start our new home, my brother Frank and I road as stow-aways in the car with father which was a means of travel used by quite a number of the early arrivals. Our ride became a near disaster for as the conductor was passing while the train was stopped, he thought he heard talk in the car. By the time he got the door open to investigate we were buried deep in the hay and father was talking to the horses. He searched but found no hoboes. The journey required nearly a week

and Mother and my two brothers and sisters had arrived by passenger ahead of us.

Our arrival was very disappointing for when we left the East the farmers were busy seeding. As the train drew to a stop we beheld a great depth of snow and were told that there was as much as 4 feet in the bush. Father was so disappointed he said "If I had the money I wouldn't unload this car but would return back home."

This late spring recalls a story of a settler, John Phippen, who was at the station a year or so later in a snow storm in June. An Englishman on the passenger train which had just stopped accosted him with, "I say chappie do you ever have summer in this country?" Mr. Phippen replied, "I don't know I have only been here eight months."

The new settlement was a dreary looking place. No roads or streets, just trails in the snow through the scrub and brush. There was no station, just a single track with no spur and no unloading platform. So the car had to be unloaded while the train waited. The team and cows were forced to jump into the snow bank. This was not quite as bad as it would be today for those little old box cars were not so high off the ground and only about half the size. About twenty or thirty of them were a load for the small Countess of Dufferin type of engine. Our furniture and household effects were piled off in the snow in a hurry with the assistance of some bystanders so the train could proceed on its western journey.

A PLACE TO LIVE

Our first task was to build a temporary place to live. We spent the first few days in the Orvis dwelling which then was housing three families. Every nook and corner was occupied. Fifteen child ren slept on the floor where the women had to step over them to prepare breakfast. Father purchased some slabs from Skene's sawmill and built a shack for the eight of us and a stable for the cattle and horses on the next lot east of the Bay View hotel. He rented a one storey house, 16 x 20 built by John Reany in the fall in which we lived the following winter. It was constructed of one ply of rough lumber covered with red tin brick siding. There was no ceiling, the heat went up to the rafters and the rough floor was cold. We didn't move very far between the two stoves. I can still vision the frost which accumulated on the nails protruding through the walls which held the metal siding.

WORK

Work that paid a wage was hard to find yet badly needed to keep six hungry youngsters eating. Father worked on the section for a short time. Before his first monthly cheque arrived we had run out of flour. He asked the flour and feed merchant to let him have a bag on credit. He was flatly refused. A kindly neighbor loaned him $2.00 to purchase it. Needless to say this neighborly act was greatly appreciated.

The Fred Stone family. Mr. Stone was the first C.P.R. Agent in Dryden. 1897.

Fred Brignall's threshing outfit on the Oxdrift Road, Stewart Corner, engineer.

Early picnic in park.

THE YEAR OF THE BIG FOREST FIRE

There appears to be some doubt as to the year when the largest bush fire of all time swept over the area from east of Ignace to west of Vermilion Bay, a distance of over 85 miles and approximately 20 miles wide. One old timer says it was in 1882 when the C.P.R. was under construction, while another claims it was 1884 after the little old wood-burning engines of the Countess of Dufferin type began rolling over the railroad through the province, belching sparks which were a constant fire hazard as they puffed along on their journey. During construction or soon after the completion of the railroad, a blaze was ignited and the fire fiend ruthlessly devasted the area except in some swamps or muskegs. Once proud trees lay in windfalls on the scorched earth, or stood blackened stubs, naked, silent sentinals that should serve as a warning to the careless hunter or wandering tourists to be careful of the cigarette or campfire and so prevent the discouraging debris of a forest tragedy — a fire.

The late Wm. Doudiet who was working as a night operator for the C.P.R. during the time of the fire, repeated the story at different times in my presence as a boy. He said that was a very dry time. The fire burned for several days and was a fearful thing to watch, especially at night. The smoke rolling high in the air was a brilliant red from the reflection of the fire carried by a high wind. The fire ran up the tall trees and the burning of their foliage made

them stand out as individual pillars of flame. The dry timber standing among the green brush burned and fell to the ground throwing up a shower of sparks making the whole a magnificent sight excelling any fireworks he had ever seen. The air was so full of smoke that daylight at times was almost as dark as night, making breathing very difficult.

The fire was not a good thing for the farm land of the new settlement for it had burned the humus from foliage of years down to the subsoil leaving only white clay on the knolls and hills. When the early settlers of 1896-97 arrived the results of that fire were still evident. The blackened Jack and Norway Pine and White Poplar stubs from which the bark had peeled were still standing. Where there had been a heavy stand of timber there were windfalls of criss-crossed trees to many feet in height. The timber which was destroyed by that early fire had grown to be quite large for I helped to cut cordwood from Pine and Poplar stubs that were from two to two feet six inches in diameter on the stump and I remember cutting Spruce sawlogs for lumber in a swamp that the fire had not touched that measured three feet. Those White Poplar stubs from which the bark had peeled were the hardest thing I ever tried to cut. They were as hard as a bone and the saw made very little impression. It required considerable time and energy to cut a block of stove wood from a log two feet in diameter. If you wanted a hot fire in the old cook stove, wood from those old pine stubs would nearly melt it down. I have seen the whole top of Mother's stove white hot and warped by placing too much in at one time. Torches could be made from Norway Pine by splitting a piece for firewood about two inches square and resplitting the end to about half its length into small squares. When burning, the wind would not extinguish the torch and I have carried them instead of a lantern to light my path through the bush at night when going to visit our neighbors.

When we arrived in 1897 the second growth of Pine and Poplar was from 10 to 15 feet in height and scrub Alders and Willows about the same. Some of the land required very little work to clear as there was not much new growth on the knolls or hills but those old stumps resisted to the last. In fact some were left to plow and work around for years until someone invented a stump machine to lift them out. Even then it was a big task to dig or pick the dirt off the stump to fill the hole from which it had been removed.

Dryden Station moved from Barclay in 1897.

DRYDEN IN 1897

There was no railway station in Dryden in 1897. The station was located at Barclay, (now known as Bedworth). The engine had to proceed to New Prospect (or Barclay Tank as the stop was designated by the C.P.R. until the start of the experimental farm) to take on water from a tank which stood on the north side of the track just east of the railway bridge. The pump house was away down on the river bank on the north side of the railway bridge where the subway now passes under it. When the double track was constructed in 1905 a new and larger tank was built on the south side of the track just opposite. The late Wm. Doudiet was pumpman in 1897. After the water system was installed in the Town this pumphouse was no longer required so another tank was built on the north side of the track just west of the station.Now that the diesel engine has become the power-plant to haul the mile-long trains this last tank has also been removed.

THE NEW SETTLEMENT'S NAME CHANGED TO DRYDEN

For the story of how Barclay Tank or New Prospect's name was changed to Dryden I am indebted to the late Wm. Skene who came to New Prospect as a young man in 1896. I quote from his story. "Early in 1897 a meeting of New Prospect citizens was called at the home of A. E. Annis, manager of the experimental farm to

decide if the name of the village should be changed as its present name did not appeal to some of them. After considerable discussion of many suggestions made, Mr. Skene moved a motion which was seconded by Chas. Silver that the name of the village be changed to Dryden in honor of its founder, the Hon. John Dryden. The motion carried and Mr. Annis requested to forward it to the authorities at Toronto."

THE FIRST STATION NOT A BOX CAR

I wish to go on record that the first station at Dryden was not a box car. The information that it was, was given by some person and recorded in the 1950 Observer Supplement. The station was moved to Dryden from Barclay on a flat car in 1897 and shunted onto the new spur just completed, where it was unloaded. With a boy's curiosity I watched the unloading and puzzled over how they had loaded so large a building, balanced it on the car for the journey and as to how they were going to unload it down on the ground.

Verification of this moving was given in a letter from Jas. Vestrup, step son of the agent Fred Stone, in a letter received during the 50th celebration and by the late Wesley Hatch's article "The Start of a New Settlement in 1896." He wrote as follows: I arrived

Fishing below the falls seventy years ago.

at Barclay Tank on June 1st, 1896 with a carload of settler's effects, there being only the main line, neither station, spur or sidetrack. Every person within sight gathered around and soon everything in the car was laid on the ground and the train proceeded on its journey. Early in the spring of 1897 the C.P.R. constructed a sidetrack on which to shunt the cars of settler's effects.

When our car arrived in April 1897 there was no sign of a box car station or spur on which to place it. Our stock was forced to jump off the car into the snowbank and the household effects unloaded in the same manner as Mr. Hatch's before the train could continue on its journey.

THE VILLAGE IN 1897

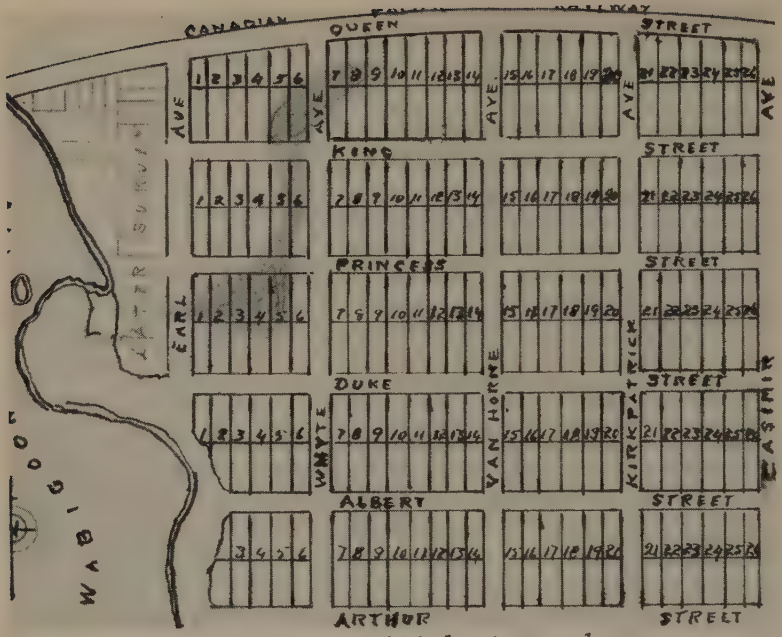
At this time the only buildings in the village were: the pioneer farm buildings and Sid Hatch's north of the C.P.R., the Quirk and Orvis combination store and dwellings on Queen Street, the G. M. Yeoman's Store, the pioneer shanty for use of the early settlers, and the Bay View Hotel on Earl Ave., the Robert Hill house (later Mrs. Dan Hutchison's residence and the Public Library) and David Smith's dwelling and post office on Queen St., the Shane boarding house on Princess, and the Alex Skene Sr. residence south of Arthur St. near the river.

Dryden began to grow rapidly in 1897. With the influx of new settlers, houses were built here and there over the village site. They were of the same type, with a gothic window in front of a two-floor dwelling. One dwelling was log, making a total of four in the village. The rest were frame and cheaply constructed requiring only a few weeks to erect. It was not till a few years later that plaster began to be used for inside finish. It was a luxury to have them boarded up on the inside with dressed lumber and covered with wallpaper.

CONSTRUCTION IN 1897

Among the buildings constructed in 1897 were: Cassidy's and Ludlow's Stores, Revel's Boarding House, now M & F Hardware, all on Queen St., Hans Carlson's dwelling, 76 Queen St., Fred Stone's, 82 Queen, later occupied by Andrew Holm, and Wm. Doudiet's, 88 Queen. The pretentious residence built by a carpenter, Jas. McDonald, 69 King, later the home of Wm. Humphrey, A. B. Orvis, 73 King on the lot where Mrs. Hamilton resides. The house was destroyed by fire when owned by Sid Bartlett. Wm. Newton, 85 King, now the home of Art Wilson. Jas. Webb, 13 Van Horne Ave., Jas. McFadyen, 15 Van Horne, now the home of Wm. Hambleton. Joe Anderson, 32 Princess, Robt. Fisher, 80 Princess, opposite the Library. Houses that were moved or demolished to make room for the new Safeway store on Princess North were built by Jas. Hood, Dick Stevenson and Wm. Connon. Geo. Sharpe built the house remodelled by Hugh Hill facing Whyte. Jack Reany built a small house which was joined later to the log house constructed by Tom Thompson, 31 Duke Ave. John Rhoades, 41 Duke. Thos. Park, 63 Duke, Chas. Wright Sr., 73 Duke. The last two were small houses since moved to make room for the large house of the late Thos. Proudfoot. Wilfred Chase built the home owned by Mrs. C. Anderson, 80 Duke Ave.

The first hardware store built in 1897 east of the Legion Hall.



Map of New Prospect 1896 showing muskeg area.

TOWNSITE SURVEYED

When the Township of Van Horne was surveyed in 1895 the Government foresaw the possibility of land being required for business and homes which would be necessary for the requirements of a farming community and had an area south of the railway track and east of the Wabigoon River surveyed into lots for that purpose. The location was well chosen for it was the beginning of one of the best townsites in Northwestern Ontario.

The area from Queen St. on the north, south to Arthur St. and east from Earl Ave. to Casimir was surveyed into quarter acre lots 66 ft. by 165 ft. These lots could be purchased from the Government, through the Crown Land Agent A. E. Annis, at $25 for a corner and $15 each for inside locations. The soil varied from sand to heavy clay and from rock to muskeg. The contour was fairly level, there being only one elevation, running southwesterly, which was scarcely high enough to be called a hill and two ravines extending a short distance from the river. These ravines, one under the present location of the curling rink and the other beneath the North American Lumber yard, were later filled with saw dust and planer shavings from sawmills on the river bank.

A strip of land about 150 feet wide running southwesterly from behind the M & F Hardware store to ravine at the North American Lumber Yard, was low lying with approximately an acre at each end a real swamp or muskeg, covered with moss to a depth of 18 inches and a growth of green spruce and tamarac fifteen to twenty feet high. The muskeg at the north end between Queen and King Streets was the scene of our first village fire.

BURNED ALL THAT SUMMER

The spring and summer of 1897 was exceptionally dry. Clearing and burning operations on the south end of the corner lot west of Queen and Whyte started a fire in the moss. A high wind swept it through the green growth in the direction of the post office, which was the only building on King St. at this time, leaving the trees blackened stubs stripped of their foliage. It required all the men and women of the village with axes, shovels and pails to save the post office from the blaze. Water was hauled from the river on wagons or a contrivance known as a sled or jumper. This was constructed of two logs for runners with planks nailed across. The logs had a crooked-up end for a nose so the sled would slide over the ground. More water remained in the barrels when drawn on this than on the wagons because the sliding motion was not so bumpy. Water was poured on any spots that appeared to be burning after the blaze in the foliage and brush. The fire had burned down through the moss in places and gotten a hold in the black soil or peat below. It only required a slight wind to start a blaze. Then one day a high wind from the southwest blew up a fire in the opposite direction which was worse than the first one. This gave the residents a very difficult time to save A. L. Orvis' store, a shack behind it and Revel's boarding house on the opposite side of Whyte Ave. The fire smoldered away most of the summer until it had burned the black soil down to the quick sand. Evidence of the nature of this quicksand was shown a few years later when Upton & Porter were building the store for Mrs. W. Evans now occupied by Wright's grocery. The building was about half constructed when a heavy rain caused the quicksand to push the east foundation wall into the basement. A work party of citizens shored the building up to keep it from falling in.

RAVINE UNDER LUMBER YARD

The land between King and Princess was low lying and wet. Just south of Princess the swamp began again. The lot now the site of the Timber Lanes Bowling Alley was muskeg covered with

moss. Joe Anderson who cleared these lots and built the former McKenzie house, dug the moss and forked it into piles for burning which looked like stacks of hay.

The lot on the corner of Princess and Earl, south, on which the North American Lumber yard is now located was once a deep ravine and the natural drainage of this swampy area. On Earl Ave. it was spanned with a short bridge and fill. The ravine which was about twelve feet deep had a growth of alder and willow bushes which made a regular hide-out. I spent many happy hours as a boy playing in it.

The first sewer was a wooden box constructed of plank and laid to the mouth of the ravine. When A. L. Orvis built his second residence in Dryden, now the site of Cadario's Store and Geo. Sharpe built the former Hugh Hill residence on Whyte Ave., their basements filled with water. In fact there was a natural spring in Mr. Orvis' cellar.

To get rid of the water they pooled their efforts and dug a sewer or drain from their dwelling to connect with the ravine. They built a box of eight inch plank and laid the wooden pipe in the ditch, backfilling it with soil. About twenty years later, when digging a hole for the foundation of Mr. Winterbottom's shop, I struck this pipe which was as sound as the day it was laid.

The ravine was filled about 1905 with sawdust and shavings from a saw and planing mill owned by Fred Brignall, located on the stream of water which was later used as the swimming pool. Mr. Brignall was required by council to continue the wooden pipe to the water before filling the ravine. A depth of soil covered the sawdust fill which gave it the appearance of solid earth. When Mr. Winterbottom, who formerly owned the lumber yard, decided to build a residence over and behind the small office on the corner by the McDonald Lumber Co., I warned him of the sawdust fill. He didn't believe it at the time as he had dug some holes to a depth of three feet over the area he was going to build on. When he had removed the topsoil for the basement he had to dig and chop through slabs and sawdust for 8 ft. to solid ground for the basement wall.

On finding the box drain at the bottom he decided it would make a good outlet for a sewer. He had a hole cut in the box and connected the house plumbing to it.The following spring he wasn't so happy about it when his basement filled with water to a depth of eight feet. He had to pump the water out, remove the plumbing and cement in the hole to keep his basement dry.

Queen Street, 1909. Left to right, Sweeney's blacksmith shop, Schellenberg building in original location, Pitt's butcher shop, Pitt's store.

Schellenberg's Store moved to Whyte Ave., now Johnson Electric building. Dwelling on corner moved to Duke St. east of Diem residence.

"Uncle Tom Hatch," Dryden's second policeman, center, left Ben Blair, right, Wm. Hanscomb, baker. First constable, Dick Stevenson, brother of Sam, appointed 1899. Third, Dick Gimoski. Salaries were $50. per month including scale weighmaster. Ron Rollo, 1908, salary $75., tax collector duty added. 1910, Robt. Barker appointed after Town incorporated.

Dryden in 1907 looking West from top Public School

THE FIRST OF THE SETTLERS

For the first residents who came to New Prospect in 1896 I have to depend on what I have been told or gathered from records of those who were here in that year.

One noteable feature was the absence of women and children. Mrs. Annis, who was in charge of the pioneer home, and her young daughter Clara, were the only woman and child in the neighborhood until fall when Mrs. William Fisher and the Shane family arrived.

THE FIRST FARMER

Sidney Hatch, a brother of Wesley, was the first to take a farm in the district. This was lot 3, Con. 6 Van Horne, 320 acres, the present location of Groveside Dairy. Mr. Hatch built a shanty and lived just west of the grove of pines on the hill. At that time the hill was a bare gravel pit, the grove was planted a few years later by Jim and his father Wesley. When Wesley arrived he located on Lot1, Con. 6, which he sold to Jas. Shearer to purchase the east 160 acres of lot 3 from Sid, and later acquired the whole 320 acres.

John Crerar and his friend Alex Fraser arrived May 15, 1896, and I quote the names of some of the early residents from his writing to the Dryden Observer on the early pioneer days. He writes that William Fisher was the first to arrive with a car of settler's effects in May, which had to be unloadedwhile the train waited. Mrs. Fisher followed later in the summer. They located on Lot 3, Con. 1, Township of Wainwright, and until they could construct

a dwelling lived, for a short time in a tent in a lane on the pioneer farm just north of Swanson's Creek.

FIRST BABY

It was here that James Wainwright Fisher was born on August 26, 1896, and because there was no doctor or midwife obtainable for the occasion William Fisher the father was thereafter known as Doc. Fisher. Mr. Crerar stated that this was the first white baby to be born in the district.

Other residents who arrived that year of which I have record were: Sandy Skene, father of Mrs. John Crerar, Robt. Hill, who built the large house in which Mrs. Dan Hutchison lived and remodelled. This building was taken down to make room for the Strand Theatre; Alex McFarline, Bill Roland, George Shane, David Smith (first postmaster) and George Sharpe. Some of these early residents were only transient and remained for a short time while others stayed through the years to help make the district what it is today.

FIRST PAYROLL

Mr. Sharpe was a contractor and brought in a carload of horses. He established the first payroll by contracting for sale of wood in Winnipeg at less than $2 per cord loaded at Dryden. He paid 60 to 70c per cord for cutting in the bush. This was small wages when a cord and a half to two cords was a day's work for the average worker but it provided a means to keep the wolf from the door. The timber was fire-killed pine, dry and hard as bone. A man had to be good with the axe to cut more. One-man cross cut and swede saws were unheard of in those days. In fact a good axe-man would scorn to use one. I knew two such men, Alex Upton and Anthony Maynard, whose pride was their ability to use an axe. Their easy, seemingly effortless swing and rhythm of motion, which sent the bite of the axe almost to the eye with each blow was a pleasure to watch. They scorned to leave the mark of the axe on the end of a stick and when using the broad-axe for hewing ties or timber. Their work was as smooth as if the stick had been planed. They have been known to chop and pile three or more cords per day.

THE SETTLEMENT IN 1897

The possible reason that there were not too many women or children in New Prospect in 1896 may have been that dwellings had to be built for their accommodation and the head of the household was loathe to bring them until this was provided. The building required time and there were few men to help. In 1897 this situation had changed. A few settlers were established in homes and

every newcomer made one more to put his shoulder to the wheel to assist those who required help. These new arrivals were made welcome and given accommodation in homes until they could provide for their own needs. The names of families I remember as here in 1907 are:

A. E. Annis, Joe Anderson, Walter Anderson, Robert Barker, Wilfred Chase, Mr. Carlson, M. C. Cassiday, William Doudiet, Robert Fisher, Doc Fisher, George Fields, Wesley Hatch, Sid Hatch, Andrew Hutchison, James Hutchison, John Hutchison, James Hood, Henry Hardy, Andrew Holm, William Kirkpatrick, William Kerney, Paul Kennedy, Mr. Kirby, G. W. Ludlow, James Lyle, James McFadyen, Charles McLean, William Newton, A. L. Orvis, A. B. Orvis, William Quirk, J. O. Revell, Ezra Roach, John Rhoades, Nat. Richardson, Alf Salton, John Sanders, Alex Skene, Fred Stone, David Smith, William Silver, James Shackelton, John Shane, Dick Stevenson, Thomas Parks and E. W. Wice.

Mining men or prospectors who were here, either single or without families were: Thomas Parks, Charles Wright, Tommy Atkins, Gus Larson and J. Stevenson. I can recall seeing these men in the evening at the Bay View Hotel grinding or breaking up pieces of rock in cast iron mortar with a pestle, then washing the dust to see if there was any gold in veins of rock which they had prospected during the day. This was very interesting to me, watching to see if there were any yellow specks showing in the pan in which they were doing the washing.

Shane's Log Boarding House Built in 1897

The first grocery store built by Wm. Quirk 1896

William Quirk was the first to get his store in operation in 1896. This building on Queen Street has had some remodelling and is now the Pine Tree Coffee Shop.

Second 1896 store built by G. M. Yeomans

G. M. Yeomans was second with a combined flour, feed and grocery followed closely in the fall by A. L. Orvis.

The Yeoman's store was situated on the east side of Earl Avenue, just north of the Bank of Montreal and was burned when occupied by J. G. Hayes as a hardware merchant.

The third grocery store in 1896 by A. L. Orvis

The A. L. Orvis building was built on the northwest corner of Queen and Whyte, now remodelled and being used as office suites. All of these buildings were constructed for use as residences as well as business.

LEFT MARK

The Orvis building has been used as a place of business and dwelling over the years up to the present date. Each new owner left his signature upon it in some manner of change until the original structure was well supported on all three sides by leanto additions. A Mr. Kirby rented the building for the winter of 1896-97 for a boarding house and store until the Orvis family arrived in March 1897 when Mr. Orvis took over for operation. Charles Coote, the second owner, added a warehouse at the rear or south end. Mr. Coote sold to his father-in-law, Joshua Reid, with a family of five girls. He found the second floor living space too small and extended to the west for more room, then added another leanto on the east side for a butcher shop. D. W. Scott the next owner extended the butcher shop and the west side dwelling to the south along the ends of the warehouse thereby completing the leanto effect on three sides of the old structure. The Jan Timber Co. demolished the surrounding lean-to's and returned the building to its original shape as it stands today.

The fourth general store built 1897 by M. C. Cassidy

LOUD WORDS

In the early summer of 1897 when I went outside our home which, at that time, was a hastily constructed shack, I heard loud noises and exclamations of instructions being given to team and teamster coming from the northwest corner of the village. On arriving at the corner of Queen and Earl I found John Hutchison with team and slush scraper and Neil Cassiday, a slim boy of about 18 years, as teamster at work on a hole for the basement of the fourth store for M. C. Cassiday. Any person who has worked with one of these old slush scrapers which were built like a giant sugar scoop with two handles instead of one for control when loading, will know that even with an expert teamster you are liable to be tossed around if the ground is hard or pitched over top in between the horses if the mouth edge should strike a root. Neil was no expert teamster. In fact, it would appear that it was about the first time he had handled the reins. Mr. Hutchison who, when excited, had a voice like a fog horn, could be heard a half mile away. This poor driving was causing the noise which had attracted me to the spot. Some of it was not even polite but anyhow, with many 'whoas,' 'back gees' twisting and turning they finally completed the excavation so that the store and dwelling could be built.

Mr. Cassiday, or "Mike" as he was known, carried on the business until his death then his son Neil took over and conducted it successfully until it was sold to Pitt & McNicol of Pipestone, Man.

The three Churches, corner Princess and Van Horne

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Those settlers coming in to face the hardships and privations of pioneer life must have been firm believers in the Sermon On The Mount, Matthew 6, verses 25 and 26, to bring their families into this new, rough and unsettled district where they were shut in without a road anywhere and no outlet except by railroad. Very few had more than enough money to bring them here, in fact, one man with a family of six had only $20.00 in his pocket when he arrived. There was no industry where they could hope to earn more. Land had to be cleared and cultivated before there would be any return from that source, yet I never heard of anyone being hungry or in want of the necessities of life. They did not have too many clothes. No second or third suits or dresses. Dad's clothes, when holes began to appear were patched or cut down for the older son, then again remodelled to fit junior. The same applied to the women. A new dress, suit or pair of shoes was something to be proud of. We children went barefoot from early spring to late fall and were glad of this opportunity to get our feet out of their winter covering, often begging to do so before the weather was warm enough.

When I think back and remember what the conditions were then, the struggle which those early pioneers had, to make both ends meet, I cannot help but admire their courage, strength of character and their faith which gave them the trust in God to provide. They enjoyed life, took its hardships and privation as a matter of course, were happy and content in the making of their new homes.

EARLY WORSHIP

Pioneer life must have been a challenge to the Christian. Moving away from the surroundings and customs of old friends and acquaintances into new environment, it would be easy to forget the church and the finer things of life in the responsibilities of building new homes among strangers, and the hardships of providing for their families in a new country. This was not what happened to the early settlers in Dryden. Their faith and trust in God continued in their new life. Their family altars were set up, prayer meetings continued and their first thoughts were of Sunday School for the children and a place of worship for themselves.

My earliest recollections of Sunday School in Dryden was in the home of A. L. Orvis on the corner of Queen and Whyte, and from there to a log house on the lot now occupied by Dryden Motors, owned by John Shane. Church services were conducted in both these houses by travelling missionaries holding services along the CPR line — Rev. Kerr, a Scotsman for the Presbyterians and Rev. Wilson for the Methodists. After the building of the public school on the property now occupied by the Municipal Offices, Sunday School and Church services were held there. Archdeacon Cooper also held services for the Anglicans in the school building. The services of the different denominations alternated to allow the ministers to serve congregations at Eagle River, Oxdrift, Elm Bay, Wabigoon and Ignace. My wife, then Bertha Orvis, as organist played for all denominations in the building, a service which she continued for the Methodist Church until the time of the union of the Methodists and the Presbyterians in 1915.

The Baptist Church in 1966 — construction started about 1909.

EARLY RECORDS

As early as 1897 a Board of Stewards for the Methodist Church is on record and the happenings and events of the early days well set out. A. L. Orvis, Ezra Roach, Amos Orvis, William Newton, Ezra Wice, A. E. Annis and John Sanders were instrumental in starting the church in Dryden. The first minister stationed here was Rev. H. A. Ireland in 1897.

Paul Kennedy Sr., his son Alex, James McFadyen, Wesley Hatch, M. C. Cassidy, Alex Skene Sr., and Magistrate James Hutchison were some of the prominent founders of the Presbyterian Church here. Their communion roll began in 1899 and bears a list of 32 members. Their first minister was Rev. J. Little.

These gentlemen who were the means of starting the Presbyterian and Methodist churches here were all highly respected and courageous men who set an example that gave all who knew them a greater respect for the strength and spirit of the Christian faith. The strict discipline of their principles and beliefs for church membership were very exacting. Drinking, dancing and card playing were not allowed by the Methodists. The Presbyterians were a little more lenient and did allow dancing. Sunday was indeed strictly observed. Newspapers were not allowed to be read on Sunday, let alone delivered on that day. Games had to be put away. A relaxation that was really enjoyed by the juveniles was an afternoon stroll with their parents.

I know of one gentleman who had not sufficient wood cut to last until Monday morning. It was a very cold night and he stayed up until after midnight Sunday to cut it. Then again I remember the action of the elders of the Presbyterian Church in regard to the steamboat that was blowing its whistle during the evening service to call the miners for the return trip to the mines for work on Monday. This, they thought, was disturbing and must be stopped until after the evening services.

THE THREE CHURCHES

The Methodist were the first to build a Church. Here are a few items from the record that may be of interest in view of present day costs. Sixty logs were taken out to be sawed into lumber for a building 22 by 36 and 12 feet high. Shingles were purchased for $24.95, Ben Blair contracted to make the window frames and sashes for three dollars each and the pews for $50. Ezra Roach built the church for $35 with the assistance of volunteer labor. In 1899 they decided to build on the southeast corner of Van Horne and Princess, just north of where now stands the Masonic Temple. Just why this

rock site was chosen I am at a loss to know when, at this early date, practically the whole town site was available for building lots. Possibly the parable of Luke 7-48 may have had some influence on their choice. Evidently it was a good location for the Anglicans chose an even more rocky one on the southwest corner and the Presbyterians followed in early 1900 on the northeast corner with James McFayden as builder.

The church was opened on the first Sunday of September, 1899. Rev. H. L. Smith was the minister.

Services were continued in the church until 1912. In 1910 the congregation had grown until the church was too small. Excavation for a new building was started on the south end of the lot. Too much rock was encountered so a new site was purchased at the corner of Van Horne and King in 1911 and a new church was constructed by Wice & George which was opened September 23, 1911. Rev. Thomas Nuttal was minister at this time. The old church was sold to the Roman Catholics and moved to a site north of their present church. It was torn down in May 1958 to make way for a new priest's residence.

The First United Church in 1966.

St. Luke's Anglican Church in 1966.

St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church in 1966.

Our Saviour Lutheran Church in 1966.

In 1913 the Presbyterians and the Methodists began negotiations to unite. This was finally accomplished in 1915 with Rev. McIntyre as first minister of the union. Dryden church is in the unique position of being the first in Canada to form a union between the two congregations 10 years before the United Church came into being June 10, 1925.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Like the two sister churches, the Anglicans also had laymen who were highly respected citizens, true to their religious convictions, active in the organization of the parish and the building of a church. Their names were recorded on documents sealed in a glass jar which was found in the foundation when the little old church was torn down to make way for the new church in 1948.

I recall seeing that corner stone laid and the placing of the jar in it by the late Archdeacon Cooper and the many hours spent by him and Thos. Hatch with volunteers helping to build the church. It was indeed a labor of love. Here is the information recorded on the document and the names of the faithful assistants:

St. Luke Church Dryden. The work of laying first stone in the erection of this Church of England was commenced this first day of May 1902. Rev. H. D. Cooper, pastor, Fred Stone and family, C.P.R. Agent, R. H. Pronger and family, Farmer, J. E. Gibson and wife, Merchant, Jas. Hood and wife, Farmer, Thos. Hatch, Farmer, J. Stratton, Miner.

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH OF MODERN TIMES

The religious beliefs and needs of the residents of Dryden in this centennial year are many and varied. Although not controlled by the strict discipline and principles of their forefathers, they are well taken care of by the seven denominations, Anglican, United, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Full Gospel and United Pentecostal, which maintain clergymen and churches and by other church groups. Besides catering to the spiritual needs, the churches contribute much to the community life through their social activities, Boy Scout, Girl Guide movements, various church and service clubs that add greatly to the spiritual welfare of the town.

A spectator appears more interested in the camera than in the wreck which injured 35 persons.

DRYDEN'S FIRST RAILWAY ACCIDENT

This story comes from the files of the old Wabigoon Star of March 30, 1905, and relates the story of Dryden's first railway accident which occurred on the high fill around the curve just west of the St. Regis Consolidated Packing Ltd.

The account of what was then called a "catastrophe" was written by Joe Osbourne, then publisher of The Star, and reads as follows:

One of the worst railway accidents on this section of the CPR system occurred at Dryden early this (Thursday) morning, although fortunately and miraculously, attended with no loss of life. The disaster happened to the third section of the westbound transcontinental which passed through Wabigoon at 6:30 a.m., arriving at Dryden at 7 where it was detained twenty minutes.

After the engine was watered the train moved out slowly and had not proceeded half a mile when a broken rail was encountered. The train was made up of four box cars, eight coaches and a caboose and was crowded with men, women and children from Eastern

Passengers scramble through shattered windows to escape from overturned coaches.

Ontario with a sprinkling of English immigrants. The engine and four box cars and one coach passed in safety, and then the catastrophe happened. First one coach left the track and fell over the steep embankment until it reached the bottom, a distance of 50 or 60 feet, followed by five others with their live freight of humanity, one of them changing to the other side of the embankment where it stuck half way down.

The scenes enacted during this awful period, as rehearsed (sic) to the Star by eyewitnesses, are indescribable. Even when the foot of the embankment was reached and further danger was over, people rushed to the windows and doors in their efforts to escape they knew not what.

Others again, knowing what was going to happen, clung to the seats and arrived in safety. One little infant was discovered with her head buried in the sand and her legs in the air, but quite uninjured.

Indeed, how so many escaped with only trifling bruises is a miracle to the Star man when he inspected the scene of the disaster and saw the coaches lying around in all shapes, one of them being

reduced to match wood. Out of 1000 people involved, only 35 were slightly wounded. Following are a few of the worst cases:

William Dessell, Dundalk, leg broken and head bruised;
Mrs. M. Davis, slightly bruised and internally injured.
Mrs. Bailey, Beduc, crushed ribs and face badly cut;
John Loagan, internally injured;
Ed Lennon, Grenfel, leg and head injured;

News of the disaster was at once wired from Dryden east and west for medical and other assistance, a hand car being dispatched to Wabigoon for Dr. White, the engine of the wrecked train being dispatched to Oxdrift for Dr. Blair.

Later on Drs. Gunne, Chapman and Farrol from Rat Portage, Dr. Coke from Ignace, arrived and attended to the wounded who had been brought to the hotels at Dryden.

Wrecking trains and crews were also soon on the spot from Rat Portage and Ignace in charge of foreman Crawford, and by noon the line was cleared and repaired. At 3 o'clock a special train arrived and the passengers resumed their journey to Winnipeg, the injured being dispatched to hospitals.

A derailment here late Monday night, July 20, 1966 at the railway bridge, ½ mile east of Dryden's first wreck could have resulted in very heavy damage or possible fatalities if any of the 14 cars loaded with wheat which left the rails, reported caused when a bearing seized on a wheel, had dropped down the 30 feet to the subway below instead of the set of wheels which careened down the embankment onto the lawn beside the subway. No estimate of damage was reported.

A derailment here Monday night July 20, 1966.

The late A. R. Hutchison, Mayor of Dryden, 1920.

THE HUTCHISON CLAN

Most of the farmers who moved to the new settlement influenced by the Agricultural Minister came from Ontario and Bruce counties. I recall the friendly rivalry that existed between the settlers from these two counties. They were always joking and ribbing each other about their accomplishments. At logging bees or barn raisings, where team work was required and captains chosen, they were nearly always to be found on opposing sides.

The story of early pioneer days would not be complete without mention of the Hutchison's who were among the first settlers to arrive. They came from Bruce County in Eastern Ontario, and were a large family of big men not afraid of hard work. They did much to open up the district for farming and were active in the community life. Andrew and James Sr. were brothers. Andy was a big, heavy-set man, generous and open-handed with a fund of stories and good jokes which usually made him the life of the village. I can still recall him in public meetings or community gatherings, his deep, resonant voice, cautioning some of the more aggressive citizens who wished to move too fast. "Go slowly, take it easy boys, we are not prepared to move yet."

His business ability led him to become Dryden's second hotel

keeper. He bought the Dryden Hotel, managed it for a number of years, then sold the business to Charles Self and purchased the Kenricia Hotel in Kenora. He had two children — Andy Jr. was killed in a sawmill accident and Mary the daughter, married Dr. Blair. After his death she became Mrs. Dave Freijd.

James Sr. was the opposite to his brother Andy, more reserved and distant. He was tall and angular and always wore a moustache and chin whisker reaching nearly down to his waist. A staunch Presbyterian, he was highly respected and became the Municipality of Van Horne's first assessor and Justice of the Peace. Paradoxically the duties of Justice of the Peace required him to control some of his brother's best customers. He was a farmer and located on Lot 2 Con. 6, Van Horne. He had a grown family of five boys, three of whom were married and two daughters Lizzie and Jenny. Bob and Gourley, the two single boys, assisted their father with the farm.

John, the eldest son, with his wife and family — Jim, Alex and May — located on Lot 6, Con. 6, Van Horne, now occupied by a grandson, Ernest. James Jr. followed later with his wife and son Harry to take up a farm, Lot 9, Con. 1, Wainwright, just west of the former illustration farm.

Harry is a medical doctor now practising in Edmonton, Alta. Last to come was his son Dan, with Mrs. Hutchison and daughter Gertie sometime in the early 1900's, I believe about 1904. They purchased the house built by Robert Hill and lived in the village. Dan was road foreman for the Department of Northern Development and much interested in mining. Along with his brother Bob, they owned several claims in the Contact Bay area. There is no need for me to mention the fine example of citizenship set by Mrs. Dan. She was the town librarian and a Sunday School teacher for many years. Beginning in the early Presbyterian Church and continuing on into the United Church Sunday School until her health compelled her to resign. She was known to most of today's citizens and will long be remembered by those whom she influenced in their early years in Sunday School. She was an artist and gave a number of beginners their first lessons in painting. Eddie Cole of Sioux Lookout is a nephew and lived with them a few years before moving to that northern town.

MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION

The early settlers in Dryden and Van Horne Township came mostly from areas in Eastern Ontario where there had been counties governed by councils and missed the municipal organization on arrival here. A school section had been formed comprising the settled portions of Van Horne and Wainwright Townships in May, 1897 named S.S. No. 1 Van Horne and Wainwright, with an assessor and collector appointed under the control of the school board, but there were matters other than education, such as building and care of roads, financing necessary conveniences and bylaws to control the general welfare of the community which did not come under the jurisdiction of a school board. Soon there was agitation for organization by some of the more progressive citizens opposed by those who are always "agin the Givernmint" no matter what the project or question might be.

The portion of the Township of Wainwright within the school section opposed the new deal which might result in more taxes and on two occasions petitioned the School Board to withdraw from the school section but changed their mind before action was taken.

The population of the village and township according to the first assessment roll prepared by Jas. Hutchison for the Municipality had increased to 281 persons, including 76 children between the ages of five and 16 and this growth in a little over two years was one of the strong arguments in favor of organization. Although the population and property to be assessed was not large enough for easy financing at that time. If the rate of growth continued, it soon would be, so the wise ones argued that it was best to be prepared so that all would reap the benefit of having a council to regulate and control the destiny of the new settlement. They had great hopes for the mining area then being staked for mining claims in Concession 1 and 2 at the south end of the Township developing into something that would bring wealth to the community for gold bricks were even then being brought in from the south country. Just how much of a dream this proved to be and the headache the claims produced in regard to tax collection, those of us who were associated in municipal work in later years may tell the story.

After due consideration at many ratepayer meetings the majority prevailed and the Township of Van Horne then went into the legal process of being formed into a municipality to have peace and harmony in the wilderness cut off from the rest of the Province, except by rail.

Having taken the proper steps as the authorities in those days thought to legally organize and set up the township of Van Horne as a municipality a nomination and election was held for members of council. Dr. H. L. Blair was elected as the Reeve and Geo. W. Ludlow, Geo. Sharpe, Robt. Fisher and John Hutchison were the members of the first council.

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING

Municipality of Van Horne, District of Rainy River. Organized April 15th, 1899. Dryden, April 15th, 1899.

First Year, First Session.

The Reeve, Dr. Blair and Councillors Geo. W. Ludlow, Geo. Sharpe, Robt. Fisher and John Hutchison sworn in office by Judge Chapple, District Judge.

Sharpe - Ludlow: That T. H. McConnell be appointed clerk Pro Tem. Carried.

CONFUSION IN MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION

Today it would require an Act of Parliament to organize a Municipality, but in those early days an application was made to the District judge who, after hearing the evidence for and against, made the decision and issued the proclamation to form the municipality and give the council legal authority to do business within the regulations of the Municipal Act. In 1948 or 49 the Department of Municipal Affairs, delving into old records, found there were a number of municipalities in Ontario that had not been legally organized and any ratepayer knowing the facts could, by appeal to the Courts, have rendered their business null and void. This posed quite a problem for the Department until they solved it in 1950 by having the Municipal Quieting Orders Act passed by Parliament.

There were three Municipalities in the Kenora District in this category. A rumor that something was wrong had been heard in municipal meetings but the secret had been well kept by the Department until November 1951 when Van Horne Council received notice to pass a by-law to make application to the Ontario Municipal Board for a Quieting Order under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Quieting Orders Act to establish the legal existence and corporate status of the Municipality and its proper area and boundaries in order to quiet doubts affecting the same. After fifty-two years of municipal organization this would have been very disturbing to some of the legal minds and founders of the Municipality had they been alive to have heard it for some of them were very careful regarding legal matters and sticklers for decorum and parlia-

mentary procedure as some of the bylaws set up and passed by council would show.

A BUSY COUNCIL

From April 20, 1909, when they first took office, to the end of the year 17 meetings were held, including specials. Regular meetings started at two p.m. and were often adjourned for an evening session at seven o'clock. Possibly Bylaw No. 1, the granddaddy of all bylaws containing fifty-three regulations for parliamentery procedure held them down to business and enabled them to accomplish their task for there was much to be done organizing and getting the new municipal machine in working order.

Twenty-three bylaws were drawn up regulating about everything in the book and passed with the third reading to cover appointment of T. H. McConnell as clerk at a salary of $85.00 including "perquisites". Miss C. E. Yeomans, treasurer at a salary of $30, she to furnish bond for $1000, James Hutchison Sr. assessor at a salary of $30., Joshua Reed, collector, salary $30., M. C. Cassiday, auditor, salary $2.50.

Municipal work was proving too strenuous for the Reeve, Dr. Blair, along with his medical practice and he tendered his resignation June 16. It was not accepted by the council. He was asked to reconsider which he did and held office for five years or until December 31, 1904.

The appointment of a school teacher as clerk was another headache for when he resigned his position as teacher to leave Dryden it also necessitated his resignation as clerk. James McFadyen was appointed Clerk pro tem for May and Wm. Quirk for the month of June until a successor could be advertised for and chosen. T. W. Thompson was appointed by bylaw June 16, '99.

JAIL AND COUNCIL CHAMBER

From the first meeting of the first Van Horne Council April 15, 1899, the problem of a suitable council chamber occupied the attention of the council. Meetings were called to get the consent of the ratepayers for a building project but they were even harder to convince in those days than now. So the council continued to meet in the Shane dining room and the McFadyen hall until June, 1904 when they decided to consult with local builders regarding plans for a "lock-up" and council chamber.

Plans were submitted by Jas. McFadyen and it was decided to proceed with construction as soon as possible after consultation with

the authorities to make sure they had the power to do so. Some councillors were afraid that if a lockup were built without proper authority they might find themselves looking out through the bars while neighbors pointed their fingers with an "I told you so". Their minds were set at ease when they found that a grant of $500. could be obtained from the government. Up to this time the agitation had been for a council chamber. They were now astute enough to drop this wording from the bylaw passed Oct. 17, 1904 for the construction and maintenance of a "lockup".

The tender of Mr. McFadyen for a building 20' x 30' with an 18' wall for $735.00 to be completed by December 15, 1904 was accepted. It was to be built on the present location of the Fire Hall and Police Station. The plans called for three cells and a corridor on the ground floor with an 8' ceiling. A stairway in the corridor led to the council chamber above. The cells were built of vertical 2" x 4" material spaced 6" apart, strengthened by ¾" iron rods bored horizontally through them.

The Village's First Jail & Council Chamber, 1905-12

The upper room had a 9' wall and a 16' ceiling for a council chamber 20' x 30'. A couple of years after the organization of the Municipality of the Town of Dryden it was sold to the continuing Municipality of Van Horne and moved to its present location on Princess street where after some remodelling, it is being used as the Public Library.

A BUILDING OF MANY USES

It was a versatile building put to many uses; for council meetings, a jail, Division courts, church service, women's gatherings, political meetings, union meetings, three times a school for public and high school students, municipal offices, a carpenter shop, elec-

tions, school board meetings and again for town council meetings while repairs were being made after a fire in the town hall. Then to wind up a useful career in its old age as a library dispensing books of knowledge, wisdom and fiction for those who care to read. If those old walls could speak what tales they could tell of deliberations and battles at council meetings, songs of praise, or words of wisdom, of children and students being taught the three "R's", their misdemeanors, or of political promises made to be forgotten.

Boys herding cattle off school grounds 1907. Corner of Princess and Van Horne. On opposite side Presbyterian Church and shed. In background on King, former residences of A. B. Orvis, Jas. McFadyen and Wm. Newton.

NOISY COW BELLS

The passing of the bylaw to regulate the running at large of horses, cattle, sheep, swine and poultry was a particular headache.

The tinkle of the sheep-bell or the more clamorous noise of a cow-bell at night was disturbing the rest of some citizens. They particularly objected when out for a walk with a girl friend or returning from a visit with a neighbor, of stepping into a half gallon of fresh green paint where some cow had parked the night before, so protests and complaints were made to the council and the poor beasts had to be regulated to the stable at night, when they could have pastured without being greatly disturbed by flies, then herded in the day time to pastures green in the country by some boy who should have been in school. This was a lonely vigil, watching and sharing with them many bites from bulldog or deer flies that

nearly lifted their pound of flesh with each bite and drove the cattle nearly frantic for the stable or a wade in the river to get rid of them.

In order that one boy would not miss too much school, turns were taken each day by a different boy whose parents were owners of cattle, then on Saturday two or more would go together for company which helped to pass the time. Sometimes when pastures that were fenced could be rented, the herd was driven out and left for the day while the boys returned to school. These were not too plentiful or the fence strong enough to hold the fly-bitten cattle who wished to return to the stable, which they sometimes did. Then the boys had to get on the jobs again.

DIRTY PIGS AND NASTY ROOSTERS

Pigs were smelly things when penned too near a neighbor's dwelling so they were pushed out to the farms or at least 300 feet from a house. Then the poor old rooster would persist in crowing at the crack of dawn every morning thereby starting a chorus of answering crows or challenges from the master of nearby flocks with the rising generation joining in ambitiously to imitate their elders. In the day time he would chase an old hen through the neighbor's garden, then because he had found a worm, stop and call his family around him to scratch and dig for more. Because this was ruining a few vegetables and the early morning chorus disturbing the sleep of the late risers was not making for good neighborly relations, he and his flock were regulated to the soup pot or out of bounds in the village. But the complainants and regulators still enjoyed their ham and eggs with fresh milk for breakfast.

BIRTH OF A NEW MUNICIPALITY

The slow growth of the young community continued, and for a village to be contained in a rural municipality was not in line with the thinking of some of the Would-be-Bigger-Big Wigs.

At first the opposition was strong, but soon the incorporates had a majority to gain their objective. In 1910 the Town of Dryden was organized with a division of the Municipality of Van Horne, the Town taking the lion's share of the assessable property according to population and boundaries, leaving the continuing Municipality of Van Horne a weakling that took thirty five years to recover a workable revenue.

The old council chamber and jail was no longer good enough for a town hall. The new name required a more pretentious building.

The first thought of the council was for a new building that would be a credit to the town. After many meetings, the idea was given up in favour of purchasing the former Orange Hall located on lot 12 north side of Duke street. The hall, had not been a financial success and was purchased by Jas. McFadyen. The old building was sold to the Municipality of Van Horne, and was moved to its present location on Princess Street.

Orangemens' Hall on Duke Street, 1910.
Moved to King Street for town offices and fire hall.

Dryden Police Headquarters and Fire Hall.
Remodelled Orangemens' hall used as town offices, 1911-56.

To move these two buildings posed quite a problem for the equipment available at the time. The former council chamber was tall and heavy with two coats of plaster. The Orange Hall was long and cumbersome and had to be moved up hill and down over the rock behind it. Dave Anderson, contractor, undertook the work with his stump puller, a mechanical device that wound a cable on a steel drum by means of a long heavy-pipe for power. A horse led in a circle was sometimes used to turn it or at other times the workmen did the twisting. The buildings were moved to their new location where the foundations were on solid rock for the heavy thinking of the Town Fathers.

The expansion of the pulp mill drew workers, some of whom built just outside of the town limits to escape a higher tax. Then, as these suburbs grew, the residents began to ask for town services and to be taken into the Town of Dryden.

ANNEXATION

In 1945 after many negotiating meetings between the respective councils, agreement was reached whereby these suburbs and a large portion of Van Horne Township was annexed to the Town and the Corporation of the Municipality of Van Horne dissolved by order of the Ontario Municipal Board effective January 1, 1955, returning the balance of the Township to unorganized territory. The final meeting of Van Horne Council was held February 17, 1955.

VAN HORNE SERVICE RECORD 1899 - 1954

REEVE

Dr. H. L. Blair, April 15, 1899 to December 30, 1904. J. W. Hatch, 1905 and 1915-16. Jas. Hutchison Sr., 1906-07. Geo. Sharpe, 1908. Ben Blair, 1909. John Hutchison, 1910-11, 1920-21, and 1925. E. W. Wice, 1912-13-14, and 1923-24. A. B. Orvis, 1917-18-19. Chas. Coombe, 1922. John K. Guthrie, 1926-27-28. Herb Wilde, 1929. Jas. Hatch, 1930-31-32-33. John H. Gibson, 1934-35 and 1944. A. G. McDonald, 1936 to 1943 and 1945 to 1951. A. G. Cook, 1952-53. Ronald Armstrong 1954 to February 15, 1955 when Municipality dissolved.

CLERK

T. H. McConnell, April 15 to May 30, 1899. Wm. Quirk and Jas. McFadyen clerks, Pro Tem, June 1899. T. W. Thompson, June 16, 1899 to February 1904. A. L. Orvis, February 1904 to 1909 continuing as town clerk in 1910. Thos. Marshall, 1910 to 1913. Chas. A. Taylor, 1915 to 1918. Jas. Hutchison, 1919-20. Dave Anderson, February 1920 to June 1923. Geo. H. Wice, June 23 to February 15, 1955, (31 years). Mrs. Bertha Wice, assistant clerk, 1949 to 1955.

Third School remodelled for Town Offices 1956 and grounds landscaped into Dryden's Beauty Spot.

TOWN OF DRYDEN SERVICE RECORD 1910 - 1966

MAYORS

Alfred Pitt, 1910-11, 1925, and 1930. Alex Kennedy, 1912. Chas. Coombe, 1913-14. Dr. D. G. Dingwall, 1917, 1926 to 1928. J. B. Beveridge, 1918-19. A. R. Hutchison, 1920. Dr. P. H. B. Wood, 1929 to 1931. J. S. Wilson, 1932-33-34. C. J. Wright, 1935-36, and 1951 to 1953 inclusive. Dr. Harold Morrison, 1937-38. Frank Foulis, 1939-40. Dr. E. M. Dutton, 1941 to 47 inclusive. J. B. Davison, 1951. J. L. Skillen, 1948 to 1950 and 1955 to 1962 inclusive (10 years). Allan Durance, 1963-66.

CLERK

A. L. Orvis, 1910-11. Chas. A. Taylor, 1912-13. Ira J. Wilde, 1914 to 1917, and part of 1918. A. G. Ripley, balance of 1918. J. E. Gibson, 1919 to July 1938. (19½ years). Wm. Hambleton, July 1938 to April 1964, 25 years. Wilf Wake, April 1964 to 1966 and still in office.

WATER AND SEWERS

With no water service in the town, water and sewerage disposal for the new Albert Street school was a big problem that had to be faced. The plans for the school called for a reinforced concrete tank to be built under the basement floor for a rainwater cistern. Then it was found that more water than could be obtained from rain would be required. On September 19, 1922 a tender from Merino Zentil was received for $3,100 for a pipeline and motor to pump water from the river. The tender was turned over to the Town and accepted as their responsibility. This was the start of Dryden's water system.

In 1923 the Town began to install sewers which replaced the school disposal field on the SW corner of Kirkpatrick and Arthur.

VITAL STATISTICS

There was no register for vital statistics in Dryden in 1896 and possibly for that reason the birth of James Wainwright Fisher, born August 26th, 1896, who according to early residents and the recorded story of the late John Crear, was the first baby born in Dryden. Possibly the birth was recorded at Rat Portage. As there are several claimants to the honor of being the first baby, I will give the first six names recorded in the early Van Horne register of Births, Marriages and Deaths.

REGISTER OF BIRTHS

Here are the first six taken from the register: John Wainwright Nicholson, born November 28, 1897; John Fredrick Roach, January 31, 1898; Walter Latimer, April 1, 1898; Archie Park, February 10, 1898; Florence Jane Elizabeth Dickson, April 3, 1898 and Robert Edward Wright, May 18, 1898. Then following under a note of "special Order to Register" are four children of John Robert and Sarah Park, vis; George, born March 26, 1898, Thomas, September 16, 1893, Robert, February 14, 1895 and William, February 21, 1896. I believe this to be the same John Park whom I knew as a prospector and miner in 1897.

REGISTER OF MARRIAGES

The first six marriages recorded are: Alex Beatty and Martha McPhail, August 11, 1898; Frank McIntosh and Ellen Myers, November 23, 1898; Webster Chase and Bertha Baker, March 15, 1899; John Sanders and Susan Tinney, May 3, 1899; Gourley Hutchison and Emily Fisher, June 14, 1899 and Thomas Lane and Kattie McEwen, June 14, 1899. The minister who officiated for the first four weddings was Rev. W. W. Bennett and for the other two, Rev. John W. Little.

REGISTER OF DEATHS

The following are the first six deaths recorded for Dryden: David Smith, postmaster, October 11, 1897, age 39; Olive Roach, December 26, 1898, age 9; John Beattie, March 31, 1899, age 26; Thomas Atkins, June 22, 1899, age 21; Maude Ritz, August 31, 1900, age 12; and Margreta Fisher, April 24, 1901, age 4.

THE FIRST FUNERAL WAS ON FOOT

The first funeral procession to the Dryden Cemetery October 11, 1897 was on foot. The remains of David Smith, postmaster, in a homemade coffin was carried on the shoulders of four stalwart pallbearers through the scrub, over fallen trees and stumps to the location of the present cemetery, followed by the mourners.

Horse-drawn hearse of 1934.

This being the first death in the new village the site had to be chosen. It was on the hill on the north-west corner of the then experimental farm and ten acres was later donated by the Government. There was no road and I don't recall how the procession crossed Swanson's Creek. Later when a road had been cut and a bridge built over the creek, a heavy wagon in summer and a sleigh in winter was used for a hearse. With the advent of the light spring wagon or democrat to the village, it was used for the purpose and gave a much easier ride for the deceased to their last resting place.

The business of making a rough box and coffin fell to the lot of the local carpenters, J. McDonald, Amos Orvis, Jas. McFadyen or Chas. Coombe.

When Dave Anderson purchased the shop and carpenter business of Jas. McFadyen he took over and branched out from the homemade construction to the manufactured or commercial coffin, which could be purchased for from $85.00 to $125.00 according to style and finish. As the town grew and business increased Mr. Anderson established an undertaking parlor, then after the war of 1914-18 he took Jack Harris in as a partner. The firm was known as Anderson and Harris and they purchased the horse drawn hearse shown in the picture.

The hearse was drawn by a team of black horses and was quite an attraction for awhile.

There was a temptation to "cash in" for the novelty and honor of the first ride. At that time the cost was fairly reasonable. The only drawback was the one-way ticket so we postponed the pleasure. Today with modern motorized vehicles and the higher cost of the casket we still have to carry on beyond our allotted time of three score years and ten.

Now in 1966 Dryden has two fully modern funeral homes. Lorne Moffat purchased the business from Anderson and Harris, continued for a while in the old parlors then remodelled the Wm. McMillan house, 50 Albert Street, into the Moffat Funeral Home. Jas. E. Seeley, in 1965 built another parlor at 52 Van Horne Ave. named the Dryden Funeral Chapel.

David Smith Residence on King Street, Dryden's first post office in 1896. Location where the Wilson Block now stands.

EARLY MAIL DELIVERY

From stories of early residents, Fred Stone, the C.P.R. agent at Barclay, acted as postmaster for New Prospect in 1896. Mail and parcels addressed in care of A. E. Annis were bundled by him and given to the mail clerk on the train to be left at New Prospect when the train stopped for water. To obtain mail not so addressed or a money order meant a walk of five miles down the railroad track to Barclay. This was the routine for most of that summer until David Smith was appointed postmaster for the village in the fall. He fitted a room for the post office in the northwest corner of his residence on King Street, now remodelled into the Alex Wilson Publications block and used for the store. Mr. Smith had a family of six girls all of whom are still living in B.C.and eastern Ontario. After his death in October, 1897, Mrs. Smith carried on as postmistress assist-

ed by her daughters. When her residence became too small her first move was to the Gordon Block, now Gordon Reid's Barber Shop. Soon this proved too small then she built the block now occupied by the Central Hardware. You can readily understand what a task Mrs. Smith had to face when she was left a widow in a pioneer settlement with a young family of girls to provide for. Yet with true pioneer spirit she faced the problem, measured up to the task, raised and educated the family that was a credit to her and highly respected in the community.

The Central Hardware building served as the Dryden post office until the Postmaster Generals Department had the one built on King Street opposite the Dryden Pharmacy about 1920. The growth of the population in a few years caused this one to be inadequate so a larger and more modern one was constructed in 1965 on the corner of King Street and Kirkpatrick Ave.

After Mrs. Smith's death her daughter Aldra was appointed to the position. Aldra was succeeded by John Harris, Cyril Wright, Mr. Brooks, and Mr. M. Vennes.

The Smith girls.
Front row Eunice, Hazel, Alma. Back row, Stella, Aldra, Lois.

1897

THE FIRST BRIDGE OVER THE WABIGOON

I do not know if a picture of the first bridge ever was taken as I have never seen one. I am giving a memory sketch as I recall it. This may not be accurate in every detail for the mind of an eight year old boy may not have been too comprehensive but it will at least give some idea of its appearance and where it stood.

Built in the summer of '97 the bridge was located at the foot of the first falls on the Wabigoon River, not at the top as I have heard some of the later residents state. The foot of the falls was chosen because of two islands in the river there which simplified the construction by narrowing the width of the water to be spanned and reducing the cost of material required. There were in reality, two bridges, the first span extended from the east shore of the larger island about the middle of the river with its centre resting on a crib on the smaller island about midway between the two. The road angled to the southwest across the larger island to the second bridge which was longer. This longer span required a different framing of the bridge truss to support it and the load which it might have to carry. The two islands spoken of may yet be seen in river to the north of the present bridge not yet having been wiped out by the refuse and waste from Industry although the distance from the east shore to the little island has been considerably narrowed.

The approaches to the bridges were not of the best. The east one had to be built down hill from the corner of Duke and Earl around a small bay in the river, (the late swimming pool), which at that time was a marsh of cat tails, around and over the rocky shore

of the river down to the first bridge. The approach to the second bridge on the west shore of the river was a very steep hill making a heavy pull for a team with a small load on a wagon. Going down the hill with a load on a wagon or sleigh the rear wheel or sleigh-runner had to be locked with a logging chain to enable the team to hold the load from running too fast. In the process of road construction the crest of the hill was later cut down to some extent to make an easier and safer grade to negotiate. The cutting down was a slow tedious work with team and old fashioned slush scraper which held a couple of wheel barrow loads of earth or loaded on a wagon with hand shovels for removal. The advent of the wheel scraper, which was unheard of at that time, was a big boon to that type of earth removal. It was a large size slush scraper on wheels which held about a yard of earth and required two men on the Johnson bar and sometimes a snatch team to load. A modern bulldozer would have made short shift of the work.

THE FIRST RIVER CROSSING

Up until the time that the bridge was completed crossing of the Wabigoon had to be made by boat or over the railway bridge. The timbers of the railway bridge to which the rails were spiked were about six inches apart so planks were laid between the rails to cover the spaces between them. The horses had to be blindfolded before they could be led across because they were afraid of the height. I recall one instance where one somehow got the point of its hoof down between the timbers and the shoe held it so that it could not be withdrawn. A train had to be flagged and held for sometime while a hole was chiseled big enough to remove the hoof. Some of the settlers who were moving onto farms west of the river moved some of their effects across by boat. Mr. Alf Salton who had taken up a homestead about three miles north west of Oxdrift purchased a heifer from James Lyle who was living on a farm on the south shore of the Wabigoon Lake. It meant an approximate journey of ten miles through the bush around the arm of the lake to lead it to Dryden and only about a half mile across the water. He decided on the water route. With my father's assistance the heifer was hobbled and placed on its side in a flat-bottomed boat. They were only nicely started on their journey when the heifer began to struggle and upset the boat. The men, after a good ducking, managed to crawl back into the boat but the poor heifer after it surfaced was forced to complete the trip by swimming. For the years which it remained in Mr. Salton's herd it went by the name of Lyle. This is only one of the many instances and mishaps of pioneer days.

THE ROAD TO OXDRIFT

Some settlers who had located farms around and north of Oxdrift were stranded in Dryden because of no road to reach their homesteads. Assistance from the Government was just as much sought after in those days as today. The only difference was that more work was done for the grant received. The amount was often duplicated by free work when the money was spent as every one was interested in getting the road built to their homes. The grant for building the bridge was boosted to help build the road to Oxdrift.

Andrew Hutchison was appointed road foreman and he hired all available men and teams to proceed with the construction.

Starting at the bridge they worked north west across the land now owned by the Dryden Paper Co. to make a railroad crossing about three-quarters of a mile west, then north on the line between Lots 5 and 6 one-half mile, angling northwest across Lot 6 to Lot 7, then north to Con. 1 Wainwright which was followed for a mile. It was here that Mr. Hutchison set up his first road camp with Charlie Silver the cook. They were now three miles from the village which was considered too far to operate from. The road camp was quite interesting to us school boys. We journeyed on Saturdays out to inspect the progress of the work, to beg a piece of pie or cake from Charlie, then rode back with the men when they went home for the week-end. The camp was moved from time to time along the road as the work progressed.

Mr. Hutchison built the road along the concession lines wherever possible only detouring to avoid steep hills or muskegs. From the first campsite he built north for a mile to what was then known as the four mile corner then west along Concession 2, Wainwright with three detours, one around a bad rocky hill, the other two to avoid muskegs. A detour was made to the south at Glengoland to miss a long stretch of muskeg in front of John Crerar's farm, then crossed the concession line to north through Matt Hydes farm to avoid a second half-mile stretch of muskeg in front of James Tuckey's. These muskegs were crossed later by what was known as corderoying. A process of cutting logs about 16 ft. long, laying them side by side to cover a stretch of swamp. Some were small, some were large. If you wished a real roller-coaster ride, just try riding over a half-mile stretch of corduroy before it has been covered with clay, on a double wagon without a spring seat. After a trip over those old time trails you would require more than a cushion to ease the bruises.

Eight miles of road building was quite an undertaking with the equipment to be had in those early days. The road was brushed to the 66 ft. width, culverts were built, soft places corduroyed and some stretches turnpiked or graded with slush scrapers. Most of the road was only a trail over the uneven ground but it served the purpose of getting the settlers out to their homes. The improvements of cutting down the hills, straightening out detours, covering the corduroy, grading the gravelling were done from time to time over the years with the incoming of more settlers and assistance of grants from the Government especially around election time. They were a far cry from the black-topped or hard surfaced highways of today.

The First Dam On The Wabigoon 1897

THE DAMMING OF THE WABIGOON

In 1897 the Village of Wabigoon was the unloading point on the C.P.R. for machinery and merchandise for the mining boom at Gold Rock on the Manitou Lake as well as the headquarters for travellers and miners on their way to the mines. It was a thriving settlement at that time far in advance of Dryden. Its hotels, stores, liquor store, station and newspaper, the "Wabigoon Star" put Wabigoon on the maps of the Province many years before Dryden was

recognized as a station on the C.P.R. Gold Rock was also quite a large village at that time, with a hotel, stores and dwellings before the slump in the gold market caused it to become a Ghost hamlet.

To transport the travellers and merchandise two steamboats, the Galatea and Wm. White, made regular trips between Wabigoon and Budreau's Landing on the Little Wabigoon Lake. The machinery was loaded on large scows and towed by the steamboats in summer. In winter the travel was over the ice by team and sleigh or dog teams. From Budreau's Landing it was a seven mile haul over a portage to Gold Rock. The shallow water in the Little Wabigoon, which in reality is a continuation to the south-east of the large Wabigoon Lake, made navigation very difficult for the steamboats and the Wabigoon River was also too shallow for these larger boats to come to Dryden. The little "Dryden Belle" had a monopoly on transportation to the mines at Contact Bay because its shallow draft allowed it to navigate the river.

Those in authority in 1898 decided to dam the Wabigoon River to overcome the difficulty of navigation and that a dam should be built on the river to raise the level of the water four feet. You can picture just what four feet of water above the existing level of the lake would do to the many square miles of area which the river drained. The C.P.R. track at Wabigoon was flooded causing the Company to raise and ballast it with rock. The softening of the road bed there was a source of trouble for years.

The low lying land surrounding the lake was flooded killing large qauntities of timber which could be seen for years as dead trees standing in the water until the wind either broke them off or tumbled them into slash. Some of the timber was salvaged for lumber or firewood.

Rocks in the lake that were above water level were covered to become reefs and a danger to navigation. Low land became marsh or muskegs. An example of this may be seen near the mouth of the river on the east side, where the Dryden Paper Co. made a road of slabs, sawdust and clay across the marsh to Pitt's Island and to the Boat Club dock. That marsh was not there until after the dam was built. It was low lying land thickly covered with a growth of large poplar, spruce and tamarac to the shore of the river.

The difference in the water level after the dam was constructed flooded this area, killing the timber and turned it into a marsh where jack fish and muskies come up in the spring to spawn. The marsh extended through to the east of the higher land nearly to the shore of the lake, turning the point almost into an island. In fact it was

known for a long time after the late Alfred Pitt purchased it as Pitt's Island.

The site chosen for the dam was on the Wabigoon River at the top of the first falls at Dryden. There was quite a rush of water here in the spring or during a wet spell of weather owing to the area of the watershed which the river drained. The normal flow was not over eight inches to a foot deep except in the channel near the west shore. A ledge of rock extended more than halfway across from the east shore gradually deepening toward the middle of the river. We boys in our bare feet waded out on this slippery ledge daring each other to see who could go the farthest. We sometimes made it to mid stream. It was a very venturesome stunt as the rush of swift-flowing water nearly carried us off our feet. If our parents had caught us in the act we would have had more than wet feet. The ledge was blasted out when the second dam was built for the pulp mill.

Second Wabigoon Dam, 1911. Built by D. T. & P. Co.

In order to reduce the volume of water passing over the falls during the construction of the dam a spillway or channel was blasted through the rock from the little marshy bay east of the falls. This required weeks of hard labour with striking hammer and drill which was the only equipment to be had then for drilling holes for the

dynamite. There were never less than two men at a time swinging the striking hammer on a drill held by a man sitting and turning it after each blow. Often there were three and I have seen four men striking on a drill at the same time. This meant very accurate timing for the stroke for each in turn. One miss would have been hard on the hands of the person turning the drill. Sharpening the drills was a busy time for a man and helper. He had to be expert in getting just the right temper on the drill point or it would not stand up to cutting the hard rock.

The rock blasted from the channel was taken over to the dam for ballast to weight down the timber cribs and fill for the V shaped forms between them. The cribs were about eight feet square and six feet high, built from square timber sawn at Sandy Skene's mill. Then they were floated out to position for the dam and filled with rock to hold them against the weight of water. The space between the cribs was timbered up four feet on the back, banked with rock and faced with plank on a slope to form a V-shaped dam. Windlasses were erected on top of the cribs to lift the timbers placed in the spillways to control the depth of water in the lake. The blasting of the channel and construction of the dam was very interesting to watch, especially the handling of the wooden cribs while they were being floated to position and anchored.

The Second Bridge and First Planing Mill 1900.

THE SECOND BRIDGE

In 1900 the second bridge on the Wabigoon was built over the dam to replace the two which led to the road across the islands at the foot of the falls. The approaches down to these bridges, especially the one to the west side of the river, were so steep and difficult that they were rather dangerous for the handling of heavy loads and to cut them down for easy access would have required considerable work. When the dam was built, its timber cribs filled with rock with short spans between them, simplified the laying of timbers for the deck of a bridge and cheapened the construction. The only place which required a truss to support the span was over the deeper channel on the west side where no crib had been built for the dam.

The location was ideal as it would place the bridge on Duke Street and there was very little grade to the approaches, so it was decided that the bridge site should be changed. The old bridges had served the requirements of the settlers for nearly three years before the change was made.

THE FIRST PLANING MILL

The planing mill shown in the picture of the second bridge was Dryden's first. There was quite a large flat ledge of rock on the west side of the river below the dam and it was on this rocky ledge that Ben Blair (a cousin of Dr. Blair) constructed the building for the planing mill. He had to build quite a length of flume to carry the water out to get a sufficient head to drive the machinery in the mill. It also had a turbine waterwheel installed at the bottom of the waterhead.

Mr. Blair had a carpenter shop on the second floor where he made window and door frames and furniture. He was very fond of wood carving and worked in carved designs wherever possible on the face of the furniture, doors and on verandahs.

USING THE SPILLWAY

The channel which had been blasted for a spillway to relieve the current of the river during the construction of the dam raised another problem. The distance across the little bay which was a marshy area before the opening of the channel was quite a distance across on Duke Street. This would require another bridge and to narrow the width down to about twelve or sixteen foot span it was filled with rock and clay. The narrowing of the inlet to the channel at this point caused quite a swift running of water into the bay which was left on the north side of the fill and bridge. The bay

made a natural watering place for the village stock. In the heat of the summer, cattle would wade in to drink and drive the flies off their legs and udders. Teams hitched to wagons could be driven in to quench their thirst without the chore of unhitching. Some of the more venturesome teamsters would drive across the bay instead of returning to cross over by the bridge although the bottom was rough and rocky and the depth would bring the water up into the wagon box. In very dry weather some left their wagons standing in the bay over night to soak up the rim of the wheels to tighten the tires.

Steam Threshing Engine Landed In The Drink

THROUGH THE BRIDGE

The first bridge spanning the inlet was not trussed to carry a heavy load. Heavy timbers were laid across on which the deck was built. When Mr. Ritz, who was moving west to thresh the grain of the farmers west of the river, drove out on the bridge it broke and he and his engine landed in the drink. To remove the engine was a problem. It had to be pulled out with block and tackle. Alice Cyre (nee Alice Hyde) who lived on the Brignall farm about one mile east of Oxdrift 1900-1910 recalled this accident in a letter dated March 29, 1960, replying to an invitation to attend the 50th. She was then a little girl of five years when she and her little brother David were given the scare of their lives as their father came to the broken bridge.

In order to cross he was forced through the rushing water of the bay with the wagon being tossed over the stones and the water

coming up into the wagon box around their feet. Alice's description of the ride was, and I quote from her letter: "I don't remember too much about the engine except that it blocked the small bridge next to the town. There was room for a person to walk past and that is the way my mother went. My dad, brother David and I stayed in the wagon. The horses plunged into the water. Maybe they swam or maybe their feet touched bottom, but I know that the fast-flowing water swung the wagon around. How the box didn't come loose and take us on down the river I'll never know. We were hanging on for dear life." The bridge constructed to replace it was built much stronger. The span was shortened by building a timber crib at each end, the shortened span supported with a heavy timber truss. No effort was spared in its construction to make it sturdy enough to prevent a similar accident. This new structure stood until the second bridge over the dam at the top of the falls was replaced by the one of steel when it was removed and the spillway completely closed with earth and rock for a roadbed with the exception of what water could pass through a 12" pipe buried in the fill. The flow of water was controlled by a valve in the pipe.

The Rebuilt Bridge & Part Earl Ave. South 1900

FALLS FORMED BY SPILLWAY

The volume of water flowing down the channel took a big drop on its return to the river below. Tumbling down over rocks this made quite a falls. When Fred Brignall purchased the land on the

east side of the little bay in 1908 for a site for his saw mill he harnessed this little falls by building a flume to carry the water out to the maximum drop and installed a turbine water wheel at the bottom. He transmitted the power back to operate a planer by setting up a long drive shaft with a pulley for a belt from the water wheel at the head of the flue and another away back at the mill to drive the planer.

The third and latest bridge built in 1960

The second of lower falls and bridge over the Wabigoon in 1908 near where Highway 17 crosses.

A Stiff Horse and Cold Car

STIFF HORSE, COLD CAR

An amusing story in Sylvia magazine, between Wm. Dixon, Dryden Wood Ranger and Jas. D. Smith, Crown Timber agent, Kenora, a sick horse, cold car trouble and tight purse strings of the Department of Lands and Forests in 1928 inspired Dick McDonald Jr. to make the above sketch. It illustrates some of the tribulations of early cold weather.

'TWAS COLD IN THEM 'THAR DAYS!

The deep snow and below normal weather of last winter bring back memories of the late Nineties when the thermometer would range from 40 to 50 below for days at a time and occasionally drop to 60 and freeze. How much lower it may have been was a matter of conjecture for 60 was the limit of the graduations and the mercury was down in the ball.

The country was new, muskegs were heavily timbered and the moss in them deep. Very little of the land had been cleared for farming. Rarely did we escape frost in every month of the year. In fact we could count on several during the summer. The intense cold penetrated deeply into the muskegs. Some of them did not completely thaw out before it started to freeze again.

I remember digging in the moss of one in late July and found frost beneath and the black gold too hard to dig. The older settlers said that these muskegs caused the air to cool down at nights and had much to do with our summer frosts. There was very little clearing of the second growth timber and brush on the higher ground did not allow a breeze to circulate. The air was still at night and summer frosts occurred more often. With the clearing of farms and

cutting of timber off the muskegs, many of them have been drained with ditches by the C.P.R. and along the highways. This has allowed movement of warmer air off the rocks and higher ground with the result that summer frosts do not occur so often and the winters are not so cold.

In the winter of 1898 father was hauling cordwood for Geo. Sharpe from across the lake down the Wabigoon River to the C.P.R. spur for shipment to Winnipeg. One cold morning in January he left our home on Duke Street before 7 a.m. to begin his day's work. I well remember the intense cold of that particular morning as I set out on my milk delivery route before going to school. I could scarcely keep my hands from freezing. The picture of father returning with his load is still registered in my mind. I could hear the sleigh runners grinding in the frozen snow and see the steam rising from the horses as he came up the river long before the load came into view. On my return the team was coming up Duke Street with the load in a fog. As they drew nearer I saw that the team was white with hoar frost. The breath was blowing from their nostrils like steam from a hose. This and the heat from their sweating bodies was rising and causing the fog. Father sitting on the load pounding his hands together and kicking his feet to keep from freezing looked like Santa Claus. His whiskers were frozen white and icicles hanging from his moustache. He stopped to give the team a breathing spell and to inquire of a passing neighbor how cold it was. When told that it was 50 below zero he said I thought it must be colder than usual for the team can hardly pull the load, "it is like trying to pull it through sand. When I reach the stable they are going in and stay there till the weather moderates." When he told the horses to start the sleigh had frozen down and the team had to be swung sideways to get the load moving again.

Talking with an 1897 old timer, Sam Stevenson, he recalled that there were six weeks that winter when the thermometer registered 30 to 60 below without a break in the cold snap. By way of contrast the following year we had a late fall with very little snow or heavy frost before Christmas.

Wilfred Chase, who owned land with a house and barn east of Casimir and north of Duke Street, later known as Chase Park, and also a farm on Sandy Beach Road, now owned by Ed. Pilkey, went out with his team and did some ploughing between Christmas and the New Year. He did that just to be able to say that in this cold country he ploughed at that season of the year, a feat which I have never heard being duplicated.

Sometimes the snow would stay with us late in the spring before it disappeared. In 1908 we had an exceptionally late spring. The snow was still lying on the north side of the hills in the fields and plenty in the bush on the 24th of May. I remember this well for that was the spring that father was preparing to build a big barn on the farm now owned by Alfred Anderson, two miles west of Dryden. The neighbors were getting quite a bit of fun out of the situation by telling him he would never require a barn that size in this country where we never had any spring. He never had a better crop. His new barn was filled and hay had to be stacked outside. One field of red clover yielded three tons to the acre.

New barn on the farm of E. W. Wice two miles west of Dryden that wouldn't be filled with hay in 1908.

Farm residence of E. W. Wice 1908. Both of these buildings were destroyed by fire of incendiary origin.

Corner Earl & Duke 1905. New bridge, D. Reid's livery barn.

PRIMITIVE SNOW REMOVAL

There were no machines in the "Wilderness" in pioneer days for keeping the roads clear of snow except the old Armstrong Scoop Shovel which came into use quite often to cut through the snow drifts. The general practice was to keep on top of each fresh fall of snow by driving over and packing it down on that which had fallen before so that in the open country the drifting snow would blow over the road. Another method was to cut winter roads through the bush to avoid the drifting snow. In the early years the winter road from Oxdrift to Dryden was entirely different from the one used in summer. The winter route followed the low muskeg land through the bush north and south of the C.P.R.

Keeping on top of the snow which was often packed to a depth of 2 feet was alright during the cold weather but immediately when it softened in the spring the teamster ran into grief. The sleigh would

Pioneer farm house, moved barn in background 1910.

Queen Street 1907.

slide over to break the slight shoulder on the edge of the trail, break off, then over would go the load of cordwood to stand on end in the deep snow. After it was reloaded, the precedure would often be repeated within a couple of sleigh lengths of the original spill. Then in time the snow would become too soft to bear the weight of the horses and they would come plunging along, breaking off with first one foot or the other, sometimes toppling over on their side, helpless to get up until unhitched from the sleigh. Some of those horses became adept at walking on the high road while others would start to crowd each other and get nowhere but down. It was interesting to watch a good teamster coming in on a wing and a prayer. Sitting up there with his tongue in his teeth, fingers crossed, guiding his team while they came stepping carefully to avoid plunging. Then after safely navigating a couple of miles of country roads to upset his load on the village street.

There was only one solution when the road became too soft for safe travel. That was to pull off where the bush would allow and break a new road through the deep snow. This action was avoided as long as possible for it was heavy work and had to be done with the empty sleigh. About this time some person invented a snowplow made of plank in the shape of a wedge or V. It was about 12" high, 8' long with a spread of 6' at the rear with a bar across the back to take the thrust of the snow. The plow when drawn by a team left a zig-zag trail because it was not heavy enough to hold a straight course and the weight of the snow would push it from side to side. It was not used too much in the open country for the first wind storm would fill the ploughed road level with the pushed up bank of snow making it harder than ever to travel.

The Council received so many complaints about the condition of the village streets in winter that in November, 1906, they ordered a heavy snowplough to be built after the same pattern on a larger scale to allow two vehicles to pass between the snow banks. It was constructed by Chas. Coombe of 4" material 18" high, 16' long with a 10' spread at the rear. A long bar was set in the middle with an iron plate on the end. This was supposed to act as a rudder to keep the plow from swinging from side to side.. The plow required four and sometimes six teams of horses to drag it through the snow.

After one storm I saw the outfit stuck in a big drift where the horses had to be unhitched and a trail dug for them to get out. The clearing of the snow there had to be completed with shovels.

TOBACCO BREAK

It was hard heavy work for the horses. The contrivance could not be pulled a great distance without a halt to allow the horses to rest and recover their breathing, yet it was used with a few improvements until the advent of the town grader.

Andy Sfreddo recalls seeing the plow in operation with the teams of Herb Wilde, John Hutchison, Swan Swanson and Cy. Byington doing the work and councillor Louis Rutter in charge. While the horses were being given their breathing spell one of the men would pull out his plug of chewing tobacco, pass it around for each of the men to bite off a big chew. The juice flowing freely, spattered the snow as they moved along to the next stop. By that time the cud was consumed and they were ready for another tobacco break.

Dryden, looking west, in 1908, Gordon Bros. sawmill and lumber piles in background.

SCHOOL DAYS

This poem composed by George Wice and dedicated to James Hatch, a school chum of the late Nineties and life-long friend.

SIXTY YEARS AGO

I wandered through the village, Jim, I sat beneath the tree
Upon the school-house playground that sheltered you and me;
But none were left to greet me, Jim, few were left to know,
Who played with us upon the rocks, some Sixty Years Ago.

The old school-house it's altered now, the benches are replaced
By new ones, unlike the ones our pocket-knives defaced.
New windows are set in the walls, no bell swings to and fro,
Like the ones that called us to our tasks, some Sixty Years Ago.

Its music now is silent, Jim, like the teacher of our class,
The lessons she taught so well that the three Rs we might pass
Will never be forgotten while we sojourn, here, below,
Memory still retains them since some Sixty Years Ago.

I paused at nine o'clock to watch the pupils come to school;
By school bus or the family car appeared to be the rule.
They ride along the same old route in sunshine, rain or snow,
The same rough miles we used to walk, some Sixty Years Ago.

Time has wrought a change, Jim, barefoot boys no longer play;
Their games are much the same, their spirits just as gay.
Knee-pants no longer mark their youth, the girls they dress just so,
The high hem-line would have shocked Grandma, Sixty Years Ago.

I strolled to the old park, Jim, and there confirmed my fears,
It was buried beneath the march of progress of the passing years;
'Twas there in twilight dim we sat or wandered to and fro
With our sweethearts, pretty girls, just less than Sixty Years Ago.

The river's running just as still, the pine trees on its side
Are no longer there, the stream appears less wide;
The old swimming hole, too, is gone, filled with mill sludge below,
'Twas there as boys we loved to bathe, some Sixty Years Ago.

The spring that bubbled 'neath the knoll by the spreading birch
Is very low; 'Twas then so high we had no need to search.
And kneeling down to get a drink, dear Jim, I started so
To see how sadly I had changed since Sixty Years Ago.

Memory of those bygone days, Jim, brought tear-drops to my eyes,
I thought of those we loved so well, those early broken ties;
They sleep upon the hill and I placed some flowers to grow
Upon the graves of those we loved, some Sixty Years Ago.

Some are upon the hillside laid, some sleep across the sea,
But few are left of our class excepting you and me,
And when our time shall come, Jim, and we are called to go,
I hope they lay us where we played, some Sixty Years Ago.

With the influx of settlers early in 1897 and the rapid growth of the village there were enough children of school age to cause their elders to worry about education. The children of school age were: Jas., Myrtle and Ralph Hatch, William Rhoades, Herb Thompson, Harvey and George Skene, William, Edley and Minnie Orvis, James and Alex Hutchison, Olive Newton, Andv and Mary Hutchison, William and Nettie Quirk, Mable Lyle, Florence, Elvira and Sam Stevenson, Bertha Orvis, Lily Hardy, William Silver, Louis, Eunice and Alma Smith, James Vestrup, Frank, George, Viola and John Wice, Almira Roach, George and Alice Shane, Grover and Frank Ludlow, Joe and Maisy Fisher and Hugh, Jim and Frank Beatty, a total of forty-three. This was more than enough for a modern classroom had they all been able to attend but the struggle of homemaking and to provide for large families kept some of the older ones at home to assist their parents.

With this number of children in the new settlement a school became a matter of much importance for according to the minutes of the first meeting of the School Board dated May 20, 1897 a previous meeting of the ratepayers had been held to form the Union School Section of Van Horne and Wainwright and the following gentlemen elected trustees: James Hutchison Sr. for a three year term, Joseph Anderson for two years and George Shearer for one year. At this first meeting of the Board James Hutchison was elected chairman and A. E. Annis Sec'ty-Treas. at a salary of $8.00 per year. Mr. Annis was to procure a brass stamp for the Section, a proper minute book and stationery. The main business of the meeting was the form of specification for tender for a school house.

The Little Red School House Up On The Rock

THE FIRST SCHOOL HOUSE

Until a school house could be planned, properly tendered for and constructed, a small, two-room house about sixteen by twenty feet owned by Mr. McMechan was rented. It was located up on the rock immediately behind Mr. Diem's residence on 55 Duke Street. The outside was covered with red tin stamped to give the appearance of brick and had four small windows for light, one in the north, two in the east and one in the west. The floor was of rough lumber and the bare feet of the pupils had to be tough to avoid getting slivers in them. The dividing partition was removed to make the interior one room. This was Dryden's first little red school house. Some later residents may remember it as the first home of William Wilkinson.

Seats and desks were home manufactured and also the teacher's desk which had a penalty box beneath large enough to hold the pupil who was not smart enough to get away with his misdemeanor. When the box was occupied the teacher sometimes sat with his chair tilted back, his feet upon the desk and tobacco in his cheek. The stove a short distance away was a target for the tobacco juice. His aim after much practice was good for he usually hit the ash pit in front of the door. The birch rod stood in the corner and believe it or not reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic were taught to the tune of that stick well applied if you were not industrious and all for the sum of $25.00 per month.

We had a school bell donated by Andrew Hutchison which was used for a dinner bell at the Bay View Hotel. This bell was hung on a frame just outside the building so that the teacher could ring it from the open window. One former pupil mentioned the other day that he saw my brother Frank disappear through this window with a dive when the teacher was after him. I suppose he wound up with a lesson from the birch rod and in the penalty box.

According to the minutes dated July 19, 1897, V. McMechan applied for a permit from the Department of Education to act as teacher but something must have altered this decision for by my recollection Mr. T. H. McConnell was our first teacher and I note in the minutes of January 22nd, 1898 he was paid $25.00 on salary account and continued to be so paid in September of that year.

Note: For the information of those who may be interested the minutes of all school board meetings from the first meeting May 20, 1897 to date are complete and on file in the Board Office.

The second school built 1897 on the location of the present Municipal Office. Moved in 1909 to 118 King Street where it still stands.

THE SECOND SCHOOL

The little red schoolhouse built there on the rock was too small and not modern. It had served as an emergency class room until proper steps could be taken for plans and financing a proper school building. The Board acquired the land where now stands the Town Municipal Offices for a school site and on September 18th '97 accepted the first assessment roll prepared by M. C. Cassiday. There had been a division of opinion as to what value should be placed on the farm land in The Township which was finally set at the Government rate of 50c per acre. The first assessment roll showed a total of $16,775.00, the rate was set at 15 mills to raise $251.62 in taxes for the year '97.

Tenders had been called for a new school house and on August 21st '97 James McDonald's tender which called for $320.00 plus the logs belonging to the trustees in the sawmill yard was accepted. A note of $30.00 security was required. As a means to reduce the cost of the new school the Board had called for a "bee" by the settlers to cut these logs to be sawn into lumber. Even in those days the Crown Timber Agent was busy. Mr. Margarah who lived in Rat Portage (now Kenora) heard of the project, came down and seized the logs for nonpayment of dues. No argument of the Board as to this being an educational project would move him. He sold the logs to G. M. Yeomans our local flour and feed merchant but on representation to the Department they were later released.

The school was to have six windows, three on the north and three on the south side so that the pupils could have a cross light with no shadows, the floors and wainscotting were to be dressed lumber, the walls above the wainscot and ceiling were to be plastered. It was about this time that lime plaster began to be used in the village. Mr. Charles Thompson, a grandfather of Mrs. William Myles who had a farm about five miles north of Oxdrift on the Wabigoon River, who was a plasterer and bricklayer did the plastering and built the chimney. Then when he was up on the roof finishing the chimney, Dr. Blair was passing on the way to his office. He called, "Charlie do you think that chimney will draw?" Charlie replied, "Yes for it draws the attention of every d— f— that passes." Dr. thought that was a very smart answer and told it many a time afterwards as a joke on himself. Mr. Thompson received $35.00 for the contract of plastering.

They let the sun shine in for no blinds were used to keep it out and for ventilation the windows were raised. On a dark or cloudy day if more light was required we lit the coal oil lamps which sat on brackets on the wall.

A school in those days was not complete unless there was a bell on the building to call the pupils in for study and until the advent of the industrial whistle the ringing of the school bell was a medium for checking clocks and watches. The dinner bell used on the first school was out of date for the new building so a belfry was constructed and a new bell purchased which could be heard at our farm two miles away. This old bell should still be in the possession of the Town as it was given to them by the Municipality of Van Horne after being removed from the roof of the municipal office where it had served as a curfew during the period the building was used as town police headquarters and council chambers. It would make an interesting relic for the Fiftieth museum.

Drinking water was carried from a well owned by A. B. Orvis on the corner of Van Horne and Queen Street until one was drilled through rock on the same corner on the school grounds. It was a western contractor that did the drilling at a certain price per foot with a guarantee that he would obtain water. He lost money on the job because his experience had been in rock beneath the prairie which was of a softer nature than this granite of ours. He could not get points that would stand up and his only salvation was that he struck a pocket of water in the rock before he went broke.

Miss Robson's Class 1903 — 65 Pupils.

TEACHING ALL GRADES

The above picture shows 68 of the 70 pupils in Miss Robson's class which she taught in Dryden's second school in 1903 at a salary of $340. per annum. Classes were big. Slates were used for scribblers and beginner's lessons were on cardboard charts. In my opinion the advantage of all grades being taught in one classroom was that the pupils interest was not held entirely to the grade which he was in but was gaining knowledge of the work ahead in other grades or a review of subjects already passed by hearing them taught again. We could hear multiplication, subtraction and division being drilled during all arithmetic periods of others classes. Addition! we had to be able to add long columns on the blackboard as fast as the teacher could run a pointer up the line. Writing had to be done slowly and as nearly perfect as possible to the copy. Spelling bees were common practice. Sides were chosen and lined on each side of the classroom, the teacher chose words from the speller which were given to each side alternately, if spelled wrong it passed over to the other side to be spelled correctly and if so the mis-speller took his or her seat. This continued until the side with the last pupil standing won. Sometimes the spelling became quite a battle between the best scholars and the teacher had to choose longer, harder words to decide the winner. Every pupil in the room participated. You were disgraced if spelled down by a junior.

The use of slates for writing was noisy but easy on the waste-paper basket. The work on them was quickly removed for the next subject by use of a damp cloth. They were made of slate in different sizes with a wooden frame and bound with a felt border to lessen the noise in handling them on the desks. Cardboard lesson charts for beginners came into general use around 1902.

HIGH RATE FOR ADVERTISING

Mr. L. H. McConnell continued to teach in the new school until the end of the term December '98. In November the Board instructed the Secretary to place an advertisement in the 'Globe' for a teacher. At the next meeting he was reimbursed 15c to cover the payment for it. The advertisement read "Teacher Wanted - Dryden Village. Apply with references, stating experience and salary expected. A. E. Annis, Dryden, Ont."

Miss Emily Kennedy, whose parents were residing on the farm now owned by J. Semack, West River Road, applied and was accepted at a salary of $250 per annum on condition that her salary be paid at the end of the year except for the amount to be received by government grant. Her salary was increased in '99 to $325 and she taught to June '01. Miss Kennedy returned to teach again in 1907.

Mr. D. McLennan who was teaching at Oxdrift was hired to take over in September '01 after Miss Kennedy at $325. per annum to be computed monthly as the number of teaching days bears to the teaching days in the year. He taught to the end of December '02.

Miss Robson applied and was accepted as teacher to begin January '03 at a salary of $340. She asked for an increase for the next term but was refused until September when she was allowed $380.

In March 1904 due to the large attendance, the Board decided to rent a classroom over A. L. Orvis's second store on the corner of Whyte and Princess. Miss Lily Shackleton a local girl who had passed her Grade VIII exams was hired to teach until the end of the term. Miss McCorkindale was engaged to begin the new term.

The Board was very careful in regard to the expense of fitting up this new classroom for a meeting of the ratepayers was called to sanction the purchase of blackboards and equipment, then in October of the same year they decided that the upkeep of the additional room was too great. Miss Robson was notified that the two rooms

Orvis Store (extreme right) Corner Whyte and Princess Second Floor Used as 1904 Classroom.

would be united and that her services would no longer be required because she had stated to one of the trustees that she would not teach if they did so. One month's notice was also given Miss McCorkindale with the option of reapplying for the position of teacher of the single classroom. She did not do so and Miss McMonagle (now Mrs. R. G. Wigle) was hired at a salary of $390. to begin January 1905.

TUITION FEES

In view of the present day costs of $1.92 per day for outside pupils it is interesting to note that in '97 John Nicholson was charged 75c per month for two children, and in 1903 the charge for pupils boarding in the section was set at $1.50 per quarter for the first child and 50c for the second child of the same family, and $2.00 per quarter for pupils outside the school section. All fees payable in advance. The School grant from the Department in 1906 was $900.

The matter of large attendance and accommodation appeared to be a continual source of worry for the Board, for again in April 1905 they decided to divide the school for a second classroom at Easter and advertised for another teacher, then in September decided to close the second room and pay Mr. Porter a month's salary in advance in lieu of notice, and increase Miss McMonagle's salary to $400. for 1905. Back again came the problem in September 1906. Miss Minnie Mooney another local girl was hired to teach until a

qualified teacher could be obtained. Miss Danbrook applied for the position and was hired on condition that three month's notice be given by either party before any change could be made. Miss McMonagle resigned at the end of the term and Miss Emily Kennedy was again appointed as teacher to begin January '07. Mr. L. B. Latty was second teacher at this time and replaced by Miss Cleland in January '08. In February '08 Miss McMonagle (now Mrs. Wigle) was requested to teach again and consented to take a class in her home at 85 Duke Street next to Laura Howe's residence.

By this time the overcrowding of accommodation had become so bad that the Board had plans and specifications drawn up by William Doudiet and called for tenders on July 15, 1908. The plans called for a four room school but only two on the ground floor were to be finished. It was to be built on the present school site and is now the Town Municipal Offices.

The Third School, Remodeled for Municipal Offices

THE THIRD SCHOOL

On August 1st '08 three tenders were received by the Board for a four-room school on plans and specifications prepared by Wm. Doudiet; D. Anderson for the sum of $3894; Jas. McFadyen, $3950 and Max Schellenberg for $3380. The trustees decided to make a change in the specifications and call for new tenders. James McFadyen was the successful bidder on August 8 and obtained the contract for $3259. The contract included the completion of the two rooms on the first floor and to oversee the construction of a base-

ment at $4.00 per day. He was to take the old building at a valuation of $400 as part payment on the contract. Mr. McFadyen moved the building to 118 King Street remodelling it into a duplex building, now a residence, 118 King Street.

The new school was complete and occupied early in the fall term with Miss Cleland and Mrs. Robinson in charge as teachers. The December meeting of the ratepayers gave a vote of thanks to the trustees for the manner in which the new school had been built and an honorium of $15.00 to Mr. Hatch and Dixon and $25.00 to William Doudiet in recognition of their services during the construction and financing of the building. Thomas Hatch was appointed caretaker at 50c per day.

Beginning January 1910, Miss Hyde and Miss Rose were teachers at a salary of $600.

The accommodation provided by the two rooms in the new school soon began to be overcrowded for at this time construction of the pulpmill by the Dryden Timber and Power Co. brought an influx of workers and newcomers to town. In 1912 the second floor of the school had to be completed to add another two rooms and by 1916 the enrollment had increased to 194. In September 1914 the upper floor of Van Horne Municipal Hall, now the Dryden Public Library, was rented at $75.00 per year. There were now six teachers on the staff and the requisition for school purpose set at $4500. Non-resident pupils were charged $1.00 per month. In September, 1916 the Baptist church was rented for another classroom at $100 per year.

THE ALBERT STREET SCHOOL

In 1919 all available accommodation in the town that was suitable for classroom purposes was being used. In April 1920 the Board was forced to divide the school attendance into morning and afternoon sessions for some of the rooms. Starting April 1st to November 1st at 1:30 to 4 p.m. and the balance of the year at 1:15 to 3:45 p.m. For the fall term of '21 the Van Horne Council was approached for use of their council chamber as a classroom to take care of the increased enrollment. The request was granted and the Council moved into the upper portion of the hall for their meetings.

RATEPAYER'S MEETING CALLED

A ratepayer's meeting was called for Dec. 14, 1921. The possibility of erecting an addition to the existing building was discussed and turned down because the grounds were too small. An eight-room

The Albert St. Twelve Room School Complete After Two Rooms Added In 1943 and 1946.

school was proposed and there were those who argued that eight rooms would never be required. How short sighted these people were was demonstrated by the fact that in the 1940's two additions had to be made, adding 4 classrooms, and in 1943 a new Separate School was built removing 50 pupils from the public school roll. A new and larger site was decided upon and that a new school should be built.

The members of the Board for '22 were M. S. Campbell, Chairman, R. S. Wigle, Albert Berry, Hugh Adair, E. W. Wice and Mr. Bigelow. The requisition for the school year was $12,500. and the estimated grant $3,000. 26 meetings of the board were held and there were 8 teachers on the staff including 2 for continuation school work.

SCHOOL SITE

The question of a site for the school proved to be a difficult problem. The first decision was for a location known as Chase Park on the east side of Casimir Ave., between Princess and Duke streets with the Council being requested to close the lane and David Ave. Water for school purposes was necessary. Gus Rodtka, a man who was known to be an expert at locating water with a willow crotch was asked to find out if a well could be had on the property and Wm. Connon engaged to test the location by boring down with a 1½" auger. Two were found at a depth of fifty feet through white building sand. The site was abandoned because of the difficulty of curbing a well in that type of soil and the depth. One was chosen further north near the railway where these gentlemen had found 15'

of water at a depth of 30 ft. My father did not like this location as it was low lying and wet so he took a half day from his farm duties to see if a better one could not be found. His choice after looking over the town was the present location of the school, but there were four dwellings on it that would have to be purchased as well as the land. The owner's were interviewed and found that $12,000 would be required to purchase at the prices asked. Two were willing to sell and four were not. Eight of the ten properties included in the Albert Street Site were expropriated and purchased at $2250. less than that asked by the owners with the result that the Board was able to purchase all the property including buildings, arbitration costs and transfers for $9,000.

The plans and specifications drawn by Architect Harry M. Scott of Fort William were sent to the Department of Education for approval.

Tenders were called for May 3, '22. Fourteen were received ranging in price from $47,300 to $60,526. Nelson and Bergman (Fathers of the present firm of Bergman and Nelson, General Contractors in Kenora) were the successful bidders at $48,000. I was appointed inspector for the Board at $50.00 for the brick and contract work and at 75c per hour for the time spent during construction of the balance of the building.

Debentures were now required. The Town Council was requested to prepare a bylaw for $50,000. to submit to the ratepayers for approval. A further issue of $9,000. was requested in Dec. 6 to meet payments for purchase of the school site. It may be of interest to note here that the $59,000. debenture issue cost the ratepayers for principal and interest at the end of thirty years $128,588.10. There were thirty annual payments of $4286.27.

OPENING OF SCHOOL

The formal opening of the school was held on Jan. 19th, 1923. Miss Lucas was appointed Principal at a salary of $1650. Other teachers on the staff and their salaries were: Miss Ingall, $1050. Miss Foster, $1050. Mrs. Lane, $1,000. Miss Pitman, $1,000. and Miss Hawkins, $1,000.

"THE CURFEW SHALL RING TONIGHT"

In pioneer days no school was complete without a bell. Until the advent of the mill whistle it was used as a medium for checking the time. The 1908 plans for the third school did not include a belfry so the new school bell was removed and placed on the then

Van Horne council chambers and jail, now the Public Library building, when it stood on King Street, site of the present fire hall. It was used as a curfew, then was silent for some years until the installation of the electric siren and the curfew bylaw again enforced. In October, 1922 the principal, Mr. Jackson, reported that pupils were neglecting their work by being out on the streets too late at night. The Board requested the Council to enact a bylaw requiring children under 14 to be off the streets by nine p.m. excepting Friday and Saturday nights.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The Old-Fashioned Remedy For Juvenile Delinquency.

That is a phrase I never heard of until recent years. If it had been used in my youth it would have required an explanation. We juveniles were not little angels in any sense of the word. Possibly we were delinquent enough to have had the term applied. The only family courts I knew of were across my father's knee with a razor strap applied to my birthday suit when the misdemeanor was bad enough to warrant it and the only suspended sentence received was for time to go to the bush and cut a switch for Mother to apply. On the other hand there were families where whipping was unknown and love, kindness prevailed. Kids were taught to respect their elders and regardless of the strictness of their parents such expressions as "The Old Man" or the "Old Woman" were not used. An older person was spoken to as Mr. or Mrs. "Satan finds mischief for idle hands to do" was a quotation I often heard used by our elders. We were usually kept too busy to find much time for mischief and if we did get out of line, father and mother were both at home in the evening, not requiring a baby-sitter. The old fashioned remedy, taken across their knees, sometimes explained on bare facts the need for the miscreant to beware.

MORE ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED

Regardless of predictions in 1922 by false prophets and diehards that an 8 room school would never be filled, by 1942 all available classroom space including the basement of the school was over-crowded so Mr. Craig, a Winnipeg architect, was asked to prepare plans for a two room addition. In 1943 tenders were invited but were considered too high. The Board decided to do the work under their own control and engaged Mr. Allan Rask to oversee the construction. When completed the cost was $15,000.

In 1946 the overcrowding condition again prevailed and the Board added another two room addition above that of 1943 giving the school now 12 rooms with a sliding partition to form two into an assembly room. Plans were drawn by the D. P. Co. engineering staff and Wm. Ayers hired to oversee the construction. The cost including the fire escape and some remodeling was $14,005.

Riverview School On Davis Street Built 1956

RIVERVIEW SCHOOL

The never ending demand for accommodation goes steadily on to meet the needs for education caused by the increasing population of the fast growing town that was once a wilderness. In 1955 the Riverview, 16 room school with large auditorium and staff offices, on Davis street was under construction by F. W. Sawatsky Ltd. at a contract cost of $273,750. When opened on March 1, 1956, 13 classes moved in.

HILLCREST SCHOOL

By 1957 Hillcrest 8 room school on Cecil Ave., North Dryden, was being built by Bergman & Nelson Ltd. at a contract price of $163,417. to accommodate pupils north of the C.P.R.

Hillcrest School On Cecil Ave. Built 1957

Pinewood School On Rourke Ave. Built 1960, Addition Added 1965

PINEWOOD SCHOOL

Then in 1960 to provide for the need of East Dryden, Pinewood 8 room school with gymnatorium, board room and school administration offices, was built on Rourke Ave. by Mayotte Construction Ltd. costing $243,300. Accommodation was again at a premium in 1965 and a 4 room addition with supply store and ventilating room was added by Bergman & Nelson Ltd. costing $116,440.

SUMMARY

The total contracted cost of the Public School buildings to date amounts to $894,446. exclusive of debenture interest or cost of school grounds.

SCHOOL SECRETARIES SERVICE RECORD

A. E. Annis May 1897 - December 1909; Wm. Doudiet 1910; W. E. Beddome 1911; T. A. G. Gordon 1912; J. S. Golden 1913 - 1922; Douglas Lane Aug. 1922 - July 1924; Frank Madder Aug. 1924 - 1928; Albert Lock 1928 - 1931; Geo. Wice 1931 - 1958; V. McTague 1958 - 1959; Dick McDonald Jr. 1959 and still in office 1966, a very versatile and efficient Secretary-Treasurer.

ST. JOSEPH'S SEPARATE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's Separate School was founded in 1943 by the late Rev. M. Dugal, then pastor of St. Joseph's Parish here. That year the enrollment was 29 pupils and A. Pelissier was appointed principal. The church hall on Arthur Street was used for a school and as enrollment increased it was remodelled into a two room school. By 1956, 100 students were attending. Still the demands for admission kept growing and despite additions and makeshift classrooms space was not available to accept further registrations. A new school became a necessity.

In 1961 a four room school by Stead & Lindstrom, Kenora contractors was built on a new site on Parkdale Road. With the growth of the town the demand for admission again increased beyond the school accommodation and in 1963 another four room addition was added by local contractors, the Saville Construction Co. Ltd.

The cost of this fully modern eight room school stands at $195,-000. with an enrollment of 240.

Chairman of the Board is Chas. Dedieu and Robt. Larue Sec.-Treas.

CONTINUATION SCHOOL

As early as 1905 continuation school work was being taught to a few pupils in grades IX and X by the teacher along with the elementary classes. A resolution passed by the ratepayers July 7, 1910 authorized the Board to obtain a third teacher for continuation classes if they deemed it advisable. It was not until 1912 when the amalgamation of the Dryden Presbyterians and Methodists left the Presbyterian Church vacant, that accommodation could be found to carry out the resolution.

The church building situated on the N.E. corner of Van Horne and Princess was later remodelled by Jas. McFadyen into a duplex dwelling, the former home of Gordon Wood. The increasing number of students for upper school work required another teacher. For the September term 1919 the building was divided by a partition. There were now seven teachers on the staff. Mr. W. E. Eade was principal of both the continuation and elementary schools. In 1923 after opening the Albert Street School the upper school work was taught in the vacated public school, now the Municipal Offices.

DISTURBING THE PEACE

Students in those days were more or less as mischevious as of today. The partition dividing the classrooms was constructed of partially dry lumber which had shrunken until there were cracks large enough to peak and poke rulers into the ribs of the class working on the board in the next room. Then, wishing to have a holiday, the teacher was forced to close the school owing to a smoking stove. It was discovered later that some of the boys had stuffed a sack into the stove pipe.

Presbyterian Church, 1912-23 Continuation School

HIGH COST OF MODERN EDUCATION EXPLAINED

Two old gentlemen passing the school were discussing the high cost of modern education and high taxes. Said one: "Thirty years ago we thought school taxes were high but were nothing like today". Just then the school bus drove up. Said the other: "There see what I mean. When I was a boy I walked three miles to school, sat and studied from nine to four with two 15 minute breaks for recess and one hour for lunch. Today they have a $5000. machine to convey them morning and night, then 15 minutes after school is called are taken out on the grounds for a ball game or into a half-million dollar gym for exercise.

DRYDEN HIGH SCHOOL,
A MILLION DOLLAR BUILDING

In the "Wilderness" days the nearest high school was at Rat Portage (now Kenora). Only well-to-do parents could afford to send there for Upper School education. After seven years of Grade IX & X continuation school subjects being taught by public school teachers and twenty three years as a Continuation School, the High School Inspector, meeting with the Board in 1935, insisted that a high school district be formed, pointing out that higher grants would be received and better qualified teachers attracted. The Board consented and petitioned the Council to designate a high school district. Dr. P. H. B. Wood was chairman and Geo. Wice, appointed Secretary-Treasurer.

The higher sounding name did not improve the building. Teaching was still in the former public school building on Van Horne Ave. under principals Miss M. Hassard 1935-37, Jas. Smith 1937-45. Gordon Wood, who joined the staff in 1939, was appointed principal in 1945 and is still continuing in that office. The school continued to be used as a high school until 1951 when it was again occupied by the public school until required for town municipal offices in 1955. By 1949 the accommodation was so overcrowded that the Board after much corresponding, sending delegates to Toronto and ratepayer troubles, appealed to the Council who took the bull by the horns re finance, they decided to build a new school on Casimir Ave with 6 classrooms, a room for home economics, general shop, library, commercial and a large auditorium. The building was designed by F. W. Warren, Architect, Hamilton, Ont. and opened in 1951.

The steadily increasing enrollment caused by the rapid growth of the town demanded more room and in 1955 five rooms with a

basement for cafeteria were added. In 1960 a second floor addition of five rooms, in 1962 a vocational wing started and completed in April, 1963, then in 1964 another six classrooms, a lab. and library were added to the south end. Six rooms west of this last project and extending to the north, leaving an inner court light well between it and the older school and also four shops to the east of the north vocational wing are planned to be started this fall.

The vocational wing of modern design by Smith, Carter and Searle, Winnipeg architects, who also designed two of the former additions, cost $536,386. was shared by the Provincial and Federal Governments with only a cost to the town of $29,000. for construction of a boys gym and equipment. This vocational wing measuring 197' x 196' contains beside the gym, a carpenters shop 34' x 60', automotive shop 60' x 54', machine shop 34' x 60', boys' occupational training room 34' x 60', girls occupational room 25' x 49' and vocational business and typing rooms.

CONSTRUCTION COSTS

1949-51, New school, Pilkey-Noble Con. Co., Hamilton, $300,000
1955, 5 rooms with basement, Bergman & Nelson, Kenora, $140,470
1960, 5 rooms, second floor, Stead & Lindstrom, Kenora, $120,870
1963-4, New vocational wing, Saville Con. Ltd., Dryden
1965, 8 rooms, south end, Saville Con. Ltd., Dryden, } $557,286

Total 34 teaching areas and two gymnasiums — $1,118,626

Staff of 58 teachers are teaching 12 options in grades 11 and 12 of which the student has a choice of four. Enrollment 880, approximately 40% are non-resident students.

Included in the options is a course in Forestry taught by R. K. B. Dunlop 1953-64 and by J. Sedgwick 1964-66, generously assisted by the forestry staff of the D. P. Co. Dryden is in the unique position of being the only school in Ontario offering this course. Credit is due to the late Norman Howe who initiated the idea, pointed out the advantages of such a course in this area to the Department of Education and received permission to have the subject taught.

SCHOOL SERVICE RECORD

Dr. P. H. Wood, chairman 1935-37, J. S. Wilson 1938-44, Dr. W. G. Robinson 1945-46, Norman Howe 1947-59, Robt. King 1960-62, Robt. Bunney 1960-66. A. McIntyre 20 years service, vice chairman and finance chairman.

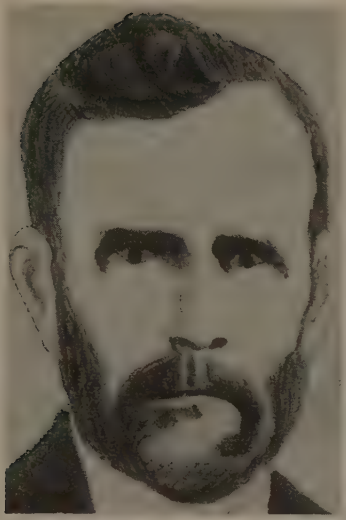
Secretary-Treasurer Geo. H. Wice 1935-57, V. McTague 1958, Mrs. M. Wheatley 1959-66, still continuing in office.

Miss M. Hassard principal 1935-37, Jas. Smith 1937-45, Gordon Wood 1945-66 and after 21 years as principal still acting.

Harry McMaster joined the staff in 1945, assistant principal 1962-66.

Blacksmith Shop and Residence of first blacksmith, corner Whyte and Duke, 1911. John and Mrs. Rhoades in foreground with their jerseys. They came to Dryden in 1907. Mr. Rhodes set his anvil up under "A Spreading Jack Pine Tree" and its music could be heard anywhere in the village. Longfellow's poem "The Village Blacksmith" will soon be only a memory in-so-far as a practical demonstration can be had. Automation has displaced it.

The Blair Block, Corner Earl & King, 1905. Destroyed by fire in 1908. Thos. Proudfoot and A. G. Ripley rented the corner store. The Cafe by Alex Upton. Millinery & Fancy Goods Store by Mrs. C. Taylor. Butcher Shop by Wm. Turnbull and Chas. Taylor's photography studio was upstairs.



Dr. Blair *Medical partners in 1911* Dr. Dingwall

EARLY DOCTORS OF THE HORSE & BUGGY DAYS

Dr. D. E. McGillivary, a young man was the first doctor to practice in Dryden in 1897. His office was in the Revell building, now the M & F Hardware. He only stayed about a year until Dr. H. L. Blair came in 1898. Dr. Blair was a tall man of reserved and distinguished bearing, highly respected both as a citizen and a doctor, He evidently had some legal training for his advice was sought and freely given on matters pertaining to law. His witty stories and good nature well-fitted him for master of ceremonies which he usually occupied at concerts and community gatherings. His cousin, Ben Blair, built him an office on the corner of King and Whyte where now stands the McLeods Store. Dr. Dingwall in later years had a residential addition added to the south end for his parents and finally demolished the building to construct the Dingwall Motor Garage.

Doctor Blair named his office "Crank's Roost" and because Rev. Archdeacon Cooper had a room and study there it was also called "Saint's Rest". The Doctor had his own dispensary and made up his own prescriptions.

HARD WORK

With an area from Ignace to Vermilion Bay and only one doctor, horse and buggy days were strenuous work and hard on a doctor's sleep and health, especially in winter. Dr. Blair had a very fine carriage pony and Albert Berry, who lived next door to the

Crank's Roost and Saint's Rest in '98
Dr. Blair's office and Rev. Cooper's study

doctor's office, said that many a time the doctor came home so stiff and cold that he had to go and send him in while he unhitched and stabled the horse. In June, 1911, Dr. Dingwall began as a young doctor to practice with Dr. Blair.

He was of great assistance to Dr. Blair, relieving him of many a long cold night journey through snow or over rough country roads or on a freight train or hand car to points east and west of Dryden. That was much different to the mode of travel by motor car today when a patient may be reached in a matter of minutes and rushed to the hospital for care and treatment. When Dr. Blair retired the late Dr. Morison, a young man with experience and ability as a surgeon assisted Dr. Dingwall. The late Dr. P. H. B. Wood, dentist, was an associate. As time went by these two doctors moved to Winnipeg. They were followed by Dr. Wm. Wigle, nephew of Dr. Dingwall, and they together modernized their practice by forming the Dingwall Medical Group which now has four Doctors and a dentist.

In 1935, Dr. Robinson, another young ambitious physician opened an office in Dryden. He was joined in 1936 by Dr. Dutton, dentist, as associate. They worked together for a number of years, giving much of their time to community life and public service as well as professionally. When Dr. Dutton retired Dr. Bilsbarrow joined as associate with Dr. Robinson. They established the Dryden Medical and Dental Clinic with four doctors and a dentist.

R. Lockyer, Optometrist, with an office on the corner of Princess and Whyte has been serving the town and district since April 1953.

THE FIRST DRUG STORES

The first drug store in Dryden was started by Mr. Merkley during the double tracking of the C.P.R. Then was purchased by A. M. Reid and located in the first store built by Wm. Quirk, now the Pine Tree Coffee Shop. About this time Dr. Lucas came to practice for a while in Dryden then went overseas with the army. A. M. Reid also joined up and for two years during the war there was no drug store until Dr. Dingwall put a nurse in there to dispense medicine. He purchased the business and moved into the store now occupied by the Johnson Electric and from there he moved to his own building, now the Dryden Pharmacy, on King Street which had formerly been occupied as a clothing store by J. E. Gibson followed by I. J. Clark.

The dispensing of drugs and anti-biotics is well taken care of and efficiently handled by Grant Fumerton, manager of two stores, the Dryden Pharmacy and Wabigoon Drugs, located in the former Pronger & Armstrong music store also located on King Street. Both buildings have been facelifted, enlarged and modernized into semi-self-service for the convenience of customers.

Red Cross Hospital Built in 1922.

OUR HOSPITALS

Dr. Dingwall early discovered the need of better skilled or trained care for the more serious cases of sickness that could not be properly cared for in their homes. To overcome this need he installed two beds in the upper rooms of "Crank's Roost" with Miss Margaret Wigle, a trained nurse, in charge. This was a big help, but inade-

quate both for room and proper facilities. The Town not being in a position to finance the building of a hospital, he pressured Dr. Routley of the Red Cross for assistance until in 1922 he had the satisfaction of seeing a Red Cross Hospital being built by Hatch, Porter & Upton, local contractors at an estimated cost of $22,000. to contain an operating room, two public and four private wards.

In 1925 Geo. Wice designed and constructed a second storey on the building for a home for the nurses. During the depression years of the early thirties and construction of the highway, the hospital was too small to care for accident cases and sickness so the Dept. of Highways was petitioned for more room. Consent was given and they moved two of their dining camps and placed them behind the hospital, joined them together and connected them to the building with a long corridor.

Nurses' Home 1925, Second Floor Addition

The passing years and increasing growth of the town demanded more hospital accommodation until the second storey nurses' home had to be used for wards and a new home built for them. (Now the residence of Dr. Daniels.) Again this additional accommodation was soon insufficient for the fast growing town. The old buildings were sold, a new site chosen on Goodall Street, donated by the Dryden Paper Co. where in 1952 was built a fully modern hospital owned by the town and district, costing $750,000, equipment $200,000 and a 21 room nurses residence.

The hospital contains an operating room with all the latest equipment, 75 beds, an 18 bassinette section and a second floor addition added in 1960-61 costing $140,000 with an unfinished shell

that will add 6 more beds. A future addition for 25 beds is planned to extend to the west. The hospital requires a regular staff of 100 persons and an annual budget of $600,000. There were 3000 admissions last year.

Charter Members June 19, 1952

John B. Davison, Chas. J. Wright, Ronald J. Armstrong, Mrs. Bernice I. Witt, Gerald A. Brown and Wm. W. Howell.

Dryden District General Hospital 1966.

THE FIRST SCHOOL NURSE

In October 1922 Miss Vietch, public health nurse, who later became the wife of Hal Dingwall, was invited to visit the school in her official capacity. Her work among the pupils contributing to their health was found to be so valuable that the Board requested regular visits of a public health nurse on a permanent basis.

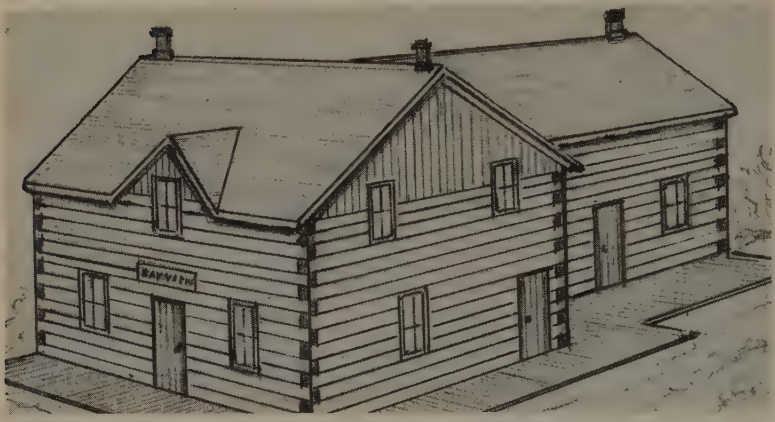
EXCERPT FROM "OLD TIMERS LAMENT"

There was Jim and Ed and John
and Bill,
With whom I used to play,
There was Min and Peg and Rose
and Lil.
The girls of yesterday.

I see them now in memory
As I dream in my old arm chair
The things we did, the games we
played,
The school-master we did dare.

I've travelled far from Dryden
Through other towns to go
But none can ever take the place
Of this old town I know.

To me those were the good old days,
Those happy days of yore.
Seventy years in it I've spent
And I hope to spend some more.



Bay View, first Hotel, corner of Earl & Duke, built in 1896.

Back in 1896 when Andrew Hutchison arrived in Barclay Tank or New Prospect, he built a large log building on the corner of Earl and Duke St. This he intended for a residence for himself and family. Then seeing the need of an eating place for prospectors and miners and the possibilities of making money by operating a bar for the sale of liquor in connection with it, he started Dryden's first hotel. His principles at that time made him reluctant to sell liquor so he rented the bar to William F. Kerney and kept the dining room himself, operating it with his wife to cook and hiring a waitress. The late Mrs. Barbara Crear, (nee Skene) worked in the hotel when she was a girl. The Bay View Hotel was built on the corner of Earl and Duke Street, south of where the Riverside Service now stands. It was destroyed early in 1899 by fire.

The Dryden House, corner Van Horne and Queen, built 1898.

DRYDEN HOUSE SECOND HOTEL

The second hotel was the Dryden House built by Lionel Anderson in 1898. It was a two storey building of frame construction (later veneered with brick) built on the corner of Van Horne and Queen Street. This was the beginning of the Dryden Hotel as it stands today. An addition was made to the rear and in 1915 C. O. Self added a third floor. Mr. Anderson did not operate the hotel very long. Andrew Hutchison sold the Bay View hotel to Mr. Kerney and purchased the Dryden House from Mr. Anderson. Lionel decided to move to Fort Frances. There was no road there from Dryden, so in the spring he loaded his household effects, his wife and child on a sleigh, to drive his team over a lake route via Gold Rock and Lake Manitou before the ice broke. He tethered his cow to the back of the sleigh and started on his journey. He had not gone very far on this pioneer journey, in fact had only just started down the Wabigoon Lake beyond Squaw Point, when the cow broke through an air hole in the ice. Unable to get the cow out of the water and back on the ice by themselves, he ran back to the Indian camp for help. The Indians were afraid to go out on the thin ice. All he could get out of them after a lot of persuasion was "cowin" the Indian word for no. The repetition of this many times aroused Mr. Anderson's anger. He said "I know the cow is in and if I don't soon get help there will be more than the cow in." This brought action and with some assistance the cow was rescued. The journey continued. Mr. Hutchison continued to operate the Dryden House until May 1, 1911, Hotel management appeared to be to his liking. He was a genial host and always had a fund of stories to tell. After he sold to Charlie Self, in a short time he purchased the Kenrica Hotel in Kenora, which he and his son-in-law, Dave Freijd continued to operate until he died.

THE HOTEL IN THE SELF FAMILY FOR OVER 50 YEARS

Mr. Self spent his early years working in the mines at Gold Rock then started in business in 1902 by purchasing and operating a small hotel at Budreau's Landing on the Little Wabigoon Lake. This was a stopping place for miners before commencing to cross the seven mile portage to Gold Rock or waiting the arrival of the steam boats to return to Wabigoon. He operated there until 1905 when he leased the Firis Hotel at Dinorwic from Tom Quin. Mr. Self was a highly respected citizen and generous in his operation of the hotel. It has been said that no patron was ever turned away for lack of funds to pay a night's lodging. Bill and sister Clara were born here.

Sheane Boarding House, 1898, corner of Earl & King, start of Central Hotel.

The original part of the Central Hotel was first a boarding house until 1900. It was built by Geo. Sheane in 1898. The Sheane's left Dryden in 1900 after selling their boarding house to Wm. F. Kerney, who started the Central Hotel there, after the Bay View Hotel was burned. He operated it as the building stood for awhile, then added a two storey addition on the west. Mr. Kerney leased the hotel to Ollie Swanson during the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway, then again took over with his son Bill.

The hotel passed through several managements before being owned and improved by Mr. Arthur Kunza, its present owner. Among them were Jim Gordon, former owner of the Cascade Hotel at Eagle River and after his death his wife continued.

In those early days there was an organization known as the Women's Christian Temperance Union which was very active in town for the improvement of conditions and control of the sale of liquor. In fact they were so active and bothersome to the hotel keepers that I heard Mr. Kerney remark one day that their name should be changed to Women Continually Troubling Us.

Which do you consider is the best method of operating? The open bar of the early days or the modern beer parlor. Then a man stood at the bar to drink his liquor and was not considered drunk as long as he could stand and ask for more. Now he sits to drink his portion and does not know he is drunk till he stands to go home. At any rate when he was drunk he was not the menace to the public that he is today, for he did not have the automobile as a weapon of destruction. He had to make home on his own wobbly legs or lay in the ditch to sober up.

Central Hotel, 1910. In this picture are the Kerney's, father and son, proprietors, stand at the front door, Richard Trist standing on his dray, Dan Hutchison at right in next buggy, Mrs. M. Tuck in next, Dr. Blair in the fore-ground and John Fisher at the extreme right.

THUNDERBIRD MOTOR HOTEL

Three miles north-west of Dryden, on the Trans-Canada Highway, is located the Thunderbird, Canada's finest wilderness Motor Motel.

Fitted with every modern convenience, it contains an indoor swimming pool, where you may bathe and swim on the coldest days of winter at room temperature of 85 degrees, in water at 76. Besides the novelty of an indoor swim in winter, there is also the Thunderbird cocktail room, a Steak room, a Gift Shop and in summer shuffle board may be played on the lawn for amusement. Built in 1955 by Tom Spence, proprietor, it has been in continuous operation. The Spence family are your hosts.

EARLY SAW MILLS

The first steam whistle to blow in Dryden, in 1897, heralded the advent of the village's first industry, a sawmill.

In 1896 Alexander Skene, a Scotsman, then a prosperous farmer at Uxbridge, Ontario, was sent to New Prospect by Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture, to investigate the possibilities of the district for agriculture. He arrived June 6 and was preceded three days by Andy Hutchison from Bruce County, sent here for the same purpose. Both these gentlemen reported favorably and were so impressed with the opportunity to better themselves in the new settlement that they prepared to bring their families here in 1897 and spent the rest of their lives molding the future of the area.

Mr. Skene saw that if settlers were to come they would require material for building homes. There was plenty of timber for log construction, but lumber would be required for roofing, floors and dividing into rooms. On reporting on this situation he was given timber concession on the banks of the Wabigoon River if he would bring in a sawmill. In the spring of '97 he blew the whistle and started sawing lumber to build a home for his family. He also brought in a mill with which he sawed shingles for many of the pioneer homes.

The mill was located just north of the Riverview Motel on the point where the channel was dredged in the Wabigoon River a few years ago for a bypass for boating around log booms at the cutting up mill. There was a good spring of clear water in the ravine to the south and near it he built the dwelling which was their first home. A few years later when love of farming caused him to return to his original vocation, he sold the large house to Charles Coombe, who divided it, moved the main portion to the south east corner of Arthur and Earl, and the kitchen to the adjoining lot where they are standing today.

The family recalled when Mr. C. Wright, Charlie's father, came to the mill in 1897 to have lumber sawn to build the Wright home, corner of Van Horne and Duke. After selling the Dryden home and closing the mill, the family moved to Wainwright Township, about 3 miles north, to start the model farm that was a showplace for the district for years and a credit to their industry. The real old Scots name Cairnbrogie was given by Mr. Skene to the school house on the property just north of the farm home.

ELM BAY SAWMILL

Another early saw and planing mill was located at Elm Bay on Wabigoon Lake, owned and operated by John Stewart. I can't state definitely the year in which it was started but I do know it was there in 1897, for Wesley Hatch, William Newton and father worked there the first summer we lived in Dryden. I am at a loss to know the reason Mr. Stewart chose that site for his mill away from any settlement, unless it could have been that the C.P.R. station, later moved to Dryden, was then at Barclay, it was handy as a shipping point and that the mill on the lakeshore was very accessible to timber on the lake. He continued to operate there for the early years, then like Mr. Skene, closed the mill and turned to farming.

THE McMILLANS

It may have been wanderlust or maybe the desire to become a lumber merchant that led William McMillan, Norman's father, to twice board an excursion train in eastern Ontario to assist in the harvest fields of the west, then proceed on to B.C. In 1895 he purchased a timber limit there but on his second visit the size of the timber scared him, it was too large to handle easily, so he decided to sell. His wanderings finally brought him and Mrs. McMillan, his young wife, to Dryden to spend the winter of '97 in a camp on Mile Lake, taking out logs for sawing into lumber the next summer. The logs were placed in booms, towed across the lake and down the river in the spring by the Minnieola, a small steamboat owned by Jimmy Shackleton.

Wm. McMillan's sawmill sketched from an early picture. In the background may be seen the early residence of Alex Skene.

The site which he chose for the mill was on the west side of Wabigoon River on what I would call McMillan's Point as a fitting name for the spot where he operated for approximately 14 years and where many of the summer activities of Norman were spent in later years while he was in the employ of the Dryden Paper Co., when he was in charge of timber operations. The spot is now occupied by the cutting-up mill.

It was there as a boy of five years that Norman says he had his initiation into the lumber business. One Saturday Charlie Lott, who was in Mr. McMillan's employ, was sick and did not show up for work. One of his jobs was to roll the logs down to the mill and assist in getting them on the carriage for sawing. Norman said "I can do that job" which he proceeded to do for the day, knocking the blocks out which held the logs back, rolling them down and assisting his father to get them on the carriage. That evening when he received $1. for his pay, he felt like a man and hoped that Charlie would not be back on Monday. The spirit of the boy indicated the man he was to become. He was always around when construction work was being done, getting hold of the lines to drive the horses or trying to help in other ways. His parents often had to hire an older boy to look after him. This was a task, for when he took the notion, his little short legs could move very fast to get him out of sight. In 1912 he first started to work for the Dryden Timber & Power Co. and was with them almost continuously for 37 years. His early experience in sawmill and bushwork soon led the company to place

McMillan's Saw & Planing Mill moved and located where curling rink now stands. Sawdust and shavings filled the deep ravine.

him in charge of their camps and bush operations. His jovial smile and genial good nature gave him the respect of the men under him and all those with whom he came in contact.

About 1912 Mr. McMillan decided to move across the river into town. The new location for his saw and planing mill was in a deep ravine where the Memorial Arena now stands. He stood one side of the mill up on posts, trestled the ravine for a track in which to run a car to carry the lumber out to pile, then gradually filled the ravine with sawdust, shavings and refuse from the mill.

Mr. McMillan built several homes in Dryden, took an active interest in public affairs and served two and a half years on the Public School Board from January 1905 to July 1907 when he resigned.

Fred Brignall's Saw & Planing Mill, 1908, where the Youth Centre now stands. In front row, Sam Stevenson, Bill Brignall, Anthony Maynard and Bill Jones. Sawdust and shavings filled ravine under North American Lumber yards over 12' deep.

THE BRIGNALL SAW & PLANING MILL

Do you remember the saw and planing mill down in the basin before the days of the now dry bathing pool? Ravines appear to have been a favorite location for setting up a sawmill because they made a good place for the easy disposal of sawdust or planer shavings which could be used as fill to level them up to the surrounding area. The large one on the south-east corner of Earl and Princess, where now stands the North American Lumber Yard, was over twelve feet deep. It extended down to the channel which had

been blasted out for a spillway so that the dam could be built on the river. This large reservoir which would hold a lot of mill refuse was possibly the reason that Fred Brignall chose the spot east of the present Youth Centre, where the foot bridge crossed the channel for the location of a sawmill in 1908.

Fred had been operating a portable sawmill around Oxdrift and Minnitaki, taking out logs and sawing lumber for the farmers, then decided to move to Dryden for winter logging and custom sawing. The first year or so, the mill was in open air, business increased and dressed lumber was required, he added a building to house a planer. The steam engine was not large enough to drive both the sawmill and planer at the same time. The power problem was solved by building a flume to carry the water in the channel along to a point where sufficient drop could be obtained for a head of water to drive a turbine water wheel. By means of a long steel shaft with bearings attached on the side of the flume, he transmitted the power obtained from the water-wheel back to where it could be used for the planer.

Fred continued in the lumber business for several years, then when the better quality of B.C. products began to replace the local lumber, he, like the two earlier mill men, turned his attention to farming. He moved back to the farm east of Oxdrift formerly owned by Matt Hyde.

Before completing the story of the Brignall mill, it may be of interest to record that the house in which he lived in Dryden, on the west side of Earl Ave., opposite the North American Lumber Co. Office, once stood on the hill east of Riverview school. He bought it from Albert Vyse and moved it down to its present location with his steam engine.

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Fred had a number of stories he used to tell of the early days, one of them was a case of mistaken identity. He was the owner of one of the first bicycles in the district. The novelty of the machine and the lack of roads at that time involved him in an amusing incident. He was riding along the railroad track when he met a group of section men on a hand car. The men saw him coming on this unusual type of machine and thinking he must be some railway official they stopped, politely removed their heavy handcar from the rails to allow him to ride by in pompous splendor, while they gazed after him in open-mouthed enquiry.

Another story was of the time when he once refused to buy thirty acres on which the Dryden Paper Co. mill now stands. I could have had this for a dollar per acre he said, with a twinkle of avarice in his eye, the whole works for $30.00.

Stuart Corner, who was engineer for the sawmill, had to be on the job at five a.m. in the winter to get steam up for starting the mill at seven o'clock. Stuart tells of an amusing incident when Jim Wilde and his son Ira came to the mill one morning with a load of logs. Ira, a young man at the time, was almost useless at any type of manual work picked up a canthook to help unload. His father, who had a very droll way of talking, said, "Ira, put that canthook down before you cut your throat." Ira later became a town clerk.

Gordon Bros. Sawmill located west of the first Wabigoon dam, 1908-10.

In 1908, when the Brignall saw mill moved into Dryden, Gordon Bros., Grant and Chas., built a saw mill on the west side of the river below the first dam. The mill was sold in 1911 to the Dryden T. & P. Co. Owing to the location of the jack ladder for the mill being below the dam and subject to the strong current it required a very strongly constructed cribbing to be built to contain the logs being floated down to it from the boom above.

The mill at that time was considered fully modern and up-to-date with steam driven carriage and gang saws which cut the timber after being slabbed on circular saw, into lumber in one operation. The steam boiler and engine were on the north side of the building and a pent house constructed on the roof was where the expert saw-filling and hammering was done. The saw-filer was the highest

paid man in the mill at that time, about $7.00 per day, for the condition of the saws made a big difference in the output of the mill for the day. The lumber was loaded at the rear of the mill upon horse-drawn cars, then taken away out into the yard west of the mill to be piled and air-dried before being moved to the planer to be dressed into the finished product.

The planing mill stood in the northwest corner of the yard where a spur had been built in from the railroad for loading convenience. This plant was also steam driven and the planer dressed the lumber at a very high rate of speed. The mill was destroyed by a night fire.

Vermilion Bay Tie Mill, sawing ties for C.P.R. in 1906 where J. S. Wilson's father was mill manager for Mather, G. Leach was bush foreman.

WABIGOON SAWMILL

As early as 1906, Wabigoon village, of Manitou Gold Rush fame, had a sawmill owned by a Mr. McLellan, who logged from limits along the shore of Wabigoon lake. When school days were over, I worked in Vermilion and Wabigoon mills. A neighbor, Wm. Mooney and I walked the 12 miles down the railroad track to be at work at 7 a.m. on Monday morning and home again after 6 p.m. Saturday night.

The mill was purchased after being idle for several years, by Lepage and Pidgeon. They obtained their logs for sawing into lumber from limits on the shore of Stormy and Long Lake, towing them with a small tug boat down Long Lake and Dinorwic rivers, then to the mill which was located on Wabigoon Bay west of the C.P.R. Station.

THE BOYS OF THE OLD BRASS BAND

The music of the town bands are always a drawing card whenever their music is heard, especially the old drum and the after time toot, toot, toot of the big brass horn which may be heard in the distance long before the smaller instruments or the marching band can be seen. At celebrations, picnics, Sunday band concerts or practices in the old band stand (which stood just east of the fire hall and moved a few years ago to Sandy Beach for a bathing dressing room) would always attract a crowd of listeners as long as the boys were playing. Even our native Canadians enjoy listening, Ki, Ki, Ki-ing and dancing to the old moose hide tom-tom.

Frank Cooper joined the band in 1913 and took to the big bass horn at once and is still tooting it. He was honored in 1964 at a banquet and presented with a bronze plaque, inscribed in recognition of his years of service to the Dryden Band. 1913- . The final year is yet to be added. Long may you still have the wind to keep blowing, Frank!

In these modern days of our over-organized town there are too many attractions which makes it hard for the leader to hold the boys together.

Picture taken in the old park of the first Dryden Band, 1901. Front row: A. L. Orvis, Wm. McLelland, school teacher, Wm. Doudiet, Wm. Fisher, Frank Fisher, John Uphill, band leader. Back row: Joe Fisher, Alex Kennedy, Amos Orvis, Wm. Newton, Harvey Fisher.

THE BAND OF 1912

Those recognized: Front row (seated) Dave Anderson, Leslie Withrow, Mr. Vicars, school teacher, leader. Next row two at right; — Jack Pitt, Center row, —, Arthur Pitt, —, —, Hugh Adair, Dave George, —, Bert Wice. Back row, Alex Kennedy, Frank Foulis, J. Wilson.

THE BAND OF 1915

Row across front: In khaki uniform, Frank Cooper, bass horn, Ben Franks, trombone, Bill Shaw, horn. In band uniform, J. Mac Wilson trombone, Hugh Moore, leader, horn. Outside row toward rear; Frank Foulis, horn, Dr. Sawyer, cornet, D. George, piccolo, H. Adair, cornet, Dunc Reid, big drum. Picture taken on King St. in front of building remodelled to Wabigoon Drugs.

THE DRYDEN BRANCH, CANADIAN LEGION
"LEST WE FORGET"

Honorable mention must be given here to the boys who fought in the two World Wars, 1914-18 and 1939-45 and to those who paid the supreme sacrifice. Their bravery is legendary. At the battle of Vimy Ridge, especially, they taught the nations of the world that whenever Canadian soldiers go into battle, they are a force to be respected.

Their record in the pages of history places great emphasis and gives strong backing to our diplomats when they speak for Canada at the United Nations. Those boys have bequeathed to us a sacred trust of LIBERTY and PEACE.

Above: Dryden Unit 52nd Battalion on parade preparing to leave for further training, 1915. Lower: Ready to march lead by Dryden Band.

THE FIRST ELECTRICAL POWER PLANT

Dryden's first power plant was a little building out in the falls below the bridge. Standing up on posts, it looked like an African Tree Dweller's structure. The first planing mill building owned by Ben Blair which stood on approximately the same site, had been removed but the flume and curbing for the power head were still there. All that was required was some remodelling and the building of a cabin to house the dynamo and electrical equipment. Possibly it was the availability of the flume and small expenditure required to convert it into a power station which led the council to finally approach Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. for electrical service. Early in 1907 the Council became interested in the project of lighting the town for in March and April they were investigating the possibility of purchasing lots 12 and 13 on the west side of Earl Ave. for a power station and on September 24 instructed the clerk to write several small towns to find out the cost of electrical power installation.

The following are excerpts from the minutes of council meetings of 1907-08. November 1, '07 that a committee interview Mr. C. B. Gordon and Max Schellenberg to see what arrangements can be made for lighting the streets and if satisfactory to have lights installed at once. December 16, '07. That a bylaw be prepared for approval of the ratepayers. January 6, '08, to give C. B. Gordon a franchise for a period of five years to provide not less than twelve fifty candle power lights for the townsite of Dryden at a cost of eight cents per light for a period of three hundred nights per year. January 24, '08 That the Property Committee make inquiry to the Department regarding the two falls on the river north of Dryden and secure control of one of them if possible.

May 29, '08, That the clerk be authorized to sign and seal agreement with Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. for street lighting. July 17, '08 first payment for lights $72.00. December 15, '08 August and September $53.54, and October and November $48.00.

Apparently council was not satisfied with the light provided when the current was turned on, for on February 21, '08, C. B. Gordon was to be notified that they would not accept or pay for the lights on the streets until the council made application for them.

April 10, '08, That the council accept the light service now given by the Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. and that the light committee draft a contract for next meeting of the council. Russell Wigle returned to Dryden in 1906 to enter the employ of the Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. then operating the sawmill on the west side of the

The Little Power Plant - 1908

river. Having had electrical experience, he was appointed engineer in 1908, to install the equipment and wire the poles for street lighting when the Gordon Co. were given the franchise. During 1906 Russell was very busy working ten hours a day for the Company and evenings trying to persuade a very capable young school teacher, Miss Henrietta McMonagle, to make her home in Dryden. That he succeeded in his evening task was just as an important event for the Town as when he later turned on the electrical current to light the streets at night and drive other shy young couples further afield to seek the cover of darkness. Over the years Mrs. Wigle improved those early capabilities which has made her influence and leadership felt in many activities and carved for herself a name highly respected both in town and district. Mrs. Wigle says the scenery was very beautiful below the dam in those early days with the water tumbling down over the rocks and spreading out into the pond below. She sought the quiet solitude and shade of the rocks and trees below the present Youth Centre for study while she was teaching and for marking exam papers.

When the water was turned to operate the turbine and drive the dynamo to generate the electricity the experiment was still a problem. Belts and pulleys had to be altered until the proper speed was obtained to produce light instead of a red glow. I recall the first night when the switch was thrown to start the current over the

wires. John Rhoades, the village blacksmith, went out with his coal oil lantern to find an electric light on the corner of Whyte and Duke, then hung it on the pole beside the red spark by way of contrast and that others might behold the wonder of water transformed into light.

Now that there were lights on the street, residents wanted them in their homes, even though at times the old coal oil lamp was better. The novelty of pushing a button to obtain light was fascinating. Mr. Wigle was kept busy operating the plant from evening until midnight then wiring homes during the day. Stuart Corner, starting the fire in the boiler at five a.m. on cold winter mornings, when he was engineer at Brignall's sawmill down at the old bathing pond, recalls seeing Russell crossing the bridge and the "catwalk", as the narrow walk over the flume to the power house was called, carrying a lantern on his way to start the machinery going to provide light for early morning risers. Other oldtimers will remember having to pass the hat at a party then hurry over the "catwalk" to pay Russell for the service of keeping the plant running after twelve p.m. if they wished to dance into the wee small hours of the morning.

These were some of the problems faced by the pioneers to bring light into darkness before the method was experimented with and improved to our modern system. The town fathers had, with foresight, obtained a lease to the second falls on the Wabigoon River known as Wainwright Falls in the hope of harnessing it some day for town power. Some who were living here at the time may recall the battle to retain it for that purpose instead of transferring the property to the Dryden Timber and Power Co. as a concession for a cheaper electrical rate when it became necessary to pull the little power plant down to make way for building the present dam. The expense to develop it outweighed the argument for private ownership and was the cause for a number of heated ratepayer meetings attended by J. B. Beveridge, Manager D. T. & P. Co., and with Andrew Hutchison advising the more aggressive to "go slow boys," "take it easy until we can afford the expense."

It was during the building of the dam that the electrical machinery was transferred to Fred Brignall's little power house on the spillway in order to provide light for the village.

Wesley Hatch's Residence 1908

The Hatch's Dairy Barn Built 1908

FROM EARLY MILK DELIVERIES TO GROVE SIDE DAIRY

No milk bottles or cartons were used for milk delivery in the early village, the children of parents who owned cows delivered the milk on foot at 5c a quart in small pails or glass sealers before going to school. The milk was emptied from the containers and taken home for mother to wash. Some customers went to the source of supply and carried their own milk.

As the population of the village grew the demand for milk inspired some farmers to increase their herds and go into dairying to add to their source of income. This changed the manner of delivery from walking to heavy wagon or democrat in summer and the bob sleigh or cutter in winter. Then with better roads and progress the auto and delivery truck were used.

Among those taking advantage of this source of income were Wesley Hatch, Ken Edye, Ed. Dawkins, Phil Horsley and John Norris. All of whom, with the passing years, have crossed the Great Divide into the unknown.

After serving in the army in World War One, Jim Hatch took over the Grove Side Dairy from his father Wesley. Then came the stricter sanitary regulations, Government inspection, milk processing, bottle washing machines, instead of the laborious hand washing, and glazed paper containers which gradually forced the smaller dairies out of business and were absorbed by Grove Side, the only dairy to survive automation and the strict regulations with modern equipment. The improving of milk processing and bottling machines naturally required more space for housing and required many improvements and additions from the start in the kitchen to a small dairy building beside the water pump, then the present up-to-date Grove Side plant which is "glistening clean for our protection", a monument to the ability, foresight and hard work of Jim, Bertha and their family.

Grove Side equipment gathers milk from farmers throughout the area to process then deliver it along with the by-products to customers within the Town and district. This was a tremendous job for Jim and Bertha during World War Two when help could not be obtained. They worked into the wee small hours of the morning, Jim often working the full twenty four hours, then when taking a bath, was so tired he slept in the tub. After the war he has been ably assisted by five of his boys who are now carrying the burden and form the Company, Grove Side Dairy Ltd.

Grove Side Dairy Plant in 1966.

EARLY TELEPHONES

The old telephone in the Museum presented by Leslie Orvis is one of a pair of the first phones installed in Dryden in 1906. It was used by A. L. Orvis, who moved with his family to Alberta in 1912, to communicate between his store, on the corner of Whyte and Princess, and residence on the same lot. The store was later destroyed by fire. Communication between the store and residence was first established by an improvised phone made from cigar boxes with a battery in each place. The wires were strung tightly from a metal bar across a hole in the boxes and attached to a diaphragm to transmit the voice vibrations of the person speaking. Attention was called by tapping the cross-bar which produced a similar noise at the other end of the line. The voice could be heard over this contraption but not too well understood.

The old 1906 phone

A name plate attached to the battery box is stamped "Reg. 1892; Bell Telephone Co." They were an earlier model than those installed for the first community service in Dryden, which were shorter and provided with the mouth piece or speaker on an extending arm, allowing an adjustment in height of about six inches.

I now have the date of the second service, set by an article written by the late Mrs. Bertha Campbell, for whose convenience the system was installed.

From this article I quote: "In October 1910, my husband, M. S. Campbell, and my father, Jas. McFadyen, decided it was necessary to arrange for telephone communication between the Campbell and McFadyen homes, the C.P.R. station, where my husband was agent, and my father's office in the building now known as the Johnson Electric Block. My father was particularly concerned, for he said, "No young mother should be without telephone communication."

"My husband received permission from J. J. Scully, then Divisional Superintendent C.P.R. in Kenora, to use the telephone poles from the station to a point opposite our home, now 113 King Street and permission from Mayor Alfred Pitt to use the town electric light poles for wiring the Campbell home to the McFadyen home, father's office, and to the station.

"In the meantime my father bought, from the Town of Kenora, all the necessary equipment, and the telephones were installed. This was the first circuit, the system very simple, worked perfectly, one ring for the station, two rings for father's office, three rings for the McFadyen home and four rings for the Campbell home, and was a great convenience.

"Drs. Blair and Dingwall then felt it would be helpful for them to have a telephone connection with the C.P.R. station. They were the C.P.R. doctors and had many calls from as far west as Vermilion Bay and east to Ignace. It was necessary for them to travel by train — mostly freight trains, as travel by road was limited.

"J. B. Beveridge, then manager of the Dryden Timber and Power Company whose increased business was dependent on the telegraph system for fast service, decided that it, too, must have telephone service. This service was added in late fall of 1911. Now there were three independent circuits with the station common to them all.

"The Blair-Dingwall circuit subsequently added the Wigle home, and the Mill added the residence of the manager to its circuit."

EARLY PHONELESS COMMUNICATION CIRCUITS

In the phoneless days, many hours were spent spreading the latest news while walking or riding to deliver a message and return. The merchant or business manager required an office boy or messenger to operate and make his contacts. If you lived on a farm the team was hitched to the wagon, or if you were lucky enough to own one, old Dobbin was led to the buggy or gig and away you rode in comfort. There was a certain amount of satisfaction in that method of personal contact because you could meet and talk with your friends along the way, gathering and delivering news as you travelled and often the heavy equipment was required to carry the load for the return journey. If the message was urgent and the doctor needed, you galloped away on Dobbin, bareback, if you did not own a saddle, always remembering that the speed limit was regulated by Bylaw to 10 miles per hour. There was no need to pause along the

way. The neighbors seeing your haste knew that there was liable to be an increase (at home) in the family of five or six.

There was a quicker way than the above to deliver a short distance message. It was the genius of a mere woman that discovered it. When Mrs. Swan Swanson, wife of a contractor on the Grand Trunk Railway construction, needed groceries she wanted in a hurry, she came out on the balcony over the verandah of her large residence just north of the C.P.R. station and called Alfred Pitt's store through a megaphone. With a blast that could be heard a half mile, she roused out a clerk who took down her order and it was delivered in less time than she could have walked to the store. Thus was established Dryden's first wireless communication system.

From the start of the new settlement in '96 its leading citizens were imbued with the spirit of progress for the welfare and advancement of the community. A school and churches, roads, bridges and sidewalks were constructed, the Wabigoon river dammed for power and better navigation to the Manitou mines, electrical services installed and industries negotiated for. Now, around 1916 the thought of a modern telephone system became the topic of the day. The council, when approached, were not too favorable to the idea. With their usual canny approach to something new, the Town Fathers thought there would not be enough subscribers to make it a self-supporting utility but would investigate the legality of a loan to finance the installation.

A company was formed to finance and carry out the project if the number of possible subscribers would warrant doing so. They set out with an objective of fifty subscribers. By the time the system went into operation there were ninety-two phones. Seven were from Van Horne, where the subscribers had to provide and erect their own poles over the three-mile line. Some of those who were elected to the Board of Directors were: Alfred Pitt, Jas. McFadyen, Chas. Coomb, J. B. Beveridge, Tom Proudfoot and A. G. Ripley.

The first exchange was operated for two years in the building (now Gordon Reid's barber shop) where Mrs. Alex Upton resided. Mrs. Upton was the first operator with her son and daughter, Milo and Elsie as assistants. They continued as operators when the exchange was moved to its second location in the building, now The Baltic Cafe.

The early exchange was sometimes a brilliant firework display during a thunderstorm, which made the board hard to operate, and numerous fuses were blown before improved lightning arresters were installed. Subscribers were requested not to use the phone during a storm.

Mrs. Frank Russel and her daughter, Mrs. Morris Spicer, took over the duties of the exchange in 1925 and continued the service until 1930, when it was moved to the rear of the town hall, with three operators, Mrs. E. J. Warren, Miss Pauline Pinkerton and Miss Jessie Fleming, each on an eight hour shift to give a twenty-four hour service. Formerly after midnight a charge was made. The night call rang a large alarm bell connected to the telephone system which really roused the operator in a hurry.

The company controlled and operated the system until it was on a paying basis. When they approached the Council for a loan to improve and extend it, a transfer was negotiated, and the town took over the system, which has proven to be a very profitable utility.

FROM MAGNETO SWITCHBOARD TO DIRECT DIALING

The magneto switchboard, (hand cranked and visual targets or drops) of approximately 100 lines was moved June, 1930 from the Russell residence owned by Jas. McFadyen, this is the present cafe next to Gordon Reid's barber shop, to the office back of the Fire Hall on King Street.

In 1948 a new telephone building was built on Princess St., directly behind the Fire Hall and the following year service from a new Northern Electric manual office of three operators positions and 750 lines were introduced. This facility was increased to a total of 6 operator positions and 1,500 lines before the decision to go dial was made by Town Council in 1961.

March of 1962 saw Dryden cut over to automatic telephone service. An extension to the existing Princess Street office was made to house the equipment and provide adequate space for future growth.

Progress has been rapid in the telephone system in keeping with the healthy growth of the Town and area and June 1966 saw us become a part of the North American Direct Dialing network with both in-dialing and out-dialing to the world.

Dryden owns and operates our Independent Telephone System as a utility and has a contract with Bell Canada for long distance service. Slightly over 2,000 subscribers enjoy reciprocal free calling with Oxdrift and Wabigoon Bell Telephone exchange areas.

EARLY BRICK-MAKING INDUSTRY

In 1913 two advertisements were being run in the Observer and Star. "Merino Zentil & Co., good red clay brick for local and export use, Dryden, Ontario." and "Elly Brick Co., makers of red brick, Dryden, Ontario". Two brick yards had been in operation, Merino Zentil's Co. built about 1908 on the location where now stands the St. Regis Consolidated Packing Ltd., and the other owned by the Elly Brick Co. was built directly north of the Agricultural grounds on the south bank of Swanson's Creek, about 2 years later. These brick yards had ceased manufacturing brick owing to a large stock in kilns which they were unable to sell.

Merino Zentil, an industrious Italian, with an ability to handle men which made him foreman on many jobs, was not afraid of hard work of any kind, even to building walls for basements of hand-mixed concrete, before the days of power driven concrete mixers.

Merino Zentil Company's Brick-Yard, 1908.

Merino's brick-making plant was a large elevated hopper with a long runway track leading up to it from an excavation in the hillside from which the red clay was dug.

A dump car was loaded by hand, then pulled by cable up the track to where the clay could be dumped into the hopper which fed it into a power grinding machine. After being ground and moistened with water to the proper consistency, the clay was tamped and pressed into brick-sized molds on flat wooden trays. The trays of bricks were loaded and wheeled to the drying racks where they were stored to dry until they could be removed from the molds and

handled when there were enough made to be built into a kiln.

Building the kiln for burning the brick was a job that required considerable skill and experience. It was a large mound of brick about the size of a small house. Arched openings with cast iron doors like a furnace were spaced a short distance apart on all four sides of the base to allow for feeding the fires. The brick had to be so placed in honey-comb formation that the smoke and heat could penetrate through the structure and contact them all.

There was considerable waste of brick in the burning process. Those that were next the fire became warped and glazed and unfit for sale while those not properly contacted by the heat were not burnt or hardened enough for use. This applied particularly to those forming the outside of the kiln. However, most of the spoiled brick were used in the construction of the next kiln where they were placed in positions near the fire to save additional waste. Once the fires were started they had to be kept burning twenty four hours a day for several days and as nearly the same temperature as possible had to be maintained until it was estimated that the brick was properly burned.

During the process of burning, the kiln had to be protected from the weather. A heavy rain would soon turn the dry molded clay into just another mound of earth. A large barn-like shed open on one side and big enough to hold several kilns at one time was constructed of lumber. It had to be high enough so that the roof would not ignite from the flame or sparks of the fire. A continuous ventilator with side wall open extended along the ridge of the roof to allow the smoke to escape.

A few of the bricks made were used in some buildings in the town, some were loaded and shipped to outside points and a large quantity were used in the construction of the pulpmill buildings by the Dryden Timber and Power Co. They appeared to be of good quality when first made but whether from improper grinding of the clay or some other cause they did not stand the test of time. After a few years some of the bricks began to crumble and deteriorate which affected the stability of the walls in which they were placed, and they had to be removed.

Experience and advancement in machinery for making brick today, have improved on this old fashioned method, but that was how they were made in Dryden 50 years ago.

HOPES OF EARLY INDUSTRY

From the beginning of the settlement, the villagers had hope of an industry to utilize the water power of the Wabigoon River. Chas. Wright, father of C. J. Wright, was also interested and tried to promote several industries to obtain a grant for its use. First it was a STAMP MILL. In 1899 he appeared before the council with John McLeod and a Mr. Nisson as promoters and a petition signed by ratepayers to loan $1000. at $70. interest for five years, to finance the building of a stamp mill. After obtaining legal advice, an agreement was drawn up, then after several letters from the Council requesting results, the agreement was regulated to "File 13".

Again on August 10, 1900, Mr. Wright, this time with Chas. Campbell and Mr. Gordon, again attended a council meeting, promoting a BOARD & PAPER MILL to cost upwards of $100,000., with an annual payroll of $60,000., provided they could obtain the use of the water power and a grant to spruce limits. In January, '06, the clerk instructed Mr. Gordon to inquire what progress had been made and advised him that unless something was done at once the Municipality was going to try and get possession of the water power. In September, '06, Mr. Gordon was given permission to cut all timber north of the park road for construction purposes and granted a conditional lease of the park. The promoters were now organized as the Gordon Pulp & Paper Co.

Start of Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. mill, west of the present subway. Jas. Wilde barn on the Golf Course in the background. It was once used as a boarding house for the men working on the construction of the power house on the north side of the C.P.R.

Gordon Pulp & Paper Co.'s forms for mill foundation 1909. Pioneer farm barn, 1905. in background.

THE PULP MILL FOUNDATION

For several years the rumor of a pulp mill to be built in Dryden had kept the early settlers in high hope of an industry to provide work in the village and a market for farm produce. In 1909, when blasting and excavation began on the narrow strip of land and rock between the railroad and the river, the Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. began construction, they thought their hopes were going to be realized. They still had some time to wait.

Why this narrowy rocky strip between the railroad and the river was chosen for a site was hard to understand when on the south side of the track there were acres of good land available. In explanation it was said that the mill had to be built down there in order to get full benefit of the drop in the river for power development. A very large expenditure would have been required to make the site convenient and accessible for shipping and transportation from the town. With the cement walls and slab of the foundation poured by the Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. all that it required was to be fitted with windows and doors to make it into a boarding house. About 40 men ate and slept in it during the construction of the power house. When the forms were nearly complete for pouring the concrete for the power house a fire somehow started in them. It was brought under control before they were completely destroyed but the damage took considerable time to repair.

PLAN ALTERED

Change of ownership to the Dryden Timber and Power Co. altered the plan and changed the site to the present location just west of the dam. They overcame the power development problem

by building the powerhouse only below the track and connecting it with a penstock or flume to carry the water from the dam and under the railroad to it, to obtain the limit of power from the falls and rapids below the C.P.R. All that remains after fifty years to mark the site and foundation for the start on Dryden's first pulp and paper mill are the concrete ruins and a few walls standing west of the subway as a monument to wasted effort and expense.

Excavation for penstock to carry water from dam to power house below the C.P.R. track. This was the location of the old Swiming Hole. In the background is seen the lumber piles, planing mill, brickyard kiln, drying racks. Engine house and grinding mill in distance.

Mill dam and Penstock, construction began 1911.

Log cabin residence of E. Bonsfield, first manager. Now Riverview Lodge.

In 1907 a Timber Limit was granted to a contractor, Robt. McLaughlin. From that limit the Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. or Gordon Bros. Saw Mill, as the plant was known locally, cut logs for the saw mill 1908-10. In 1907 the Company was granted a Water Power Lease. In 1911 the original Timber Lease was assigned to the Dryden Timber & Power Co. Ltd. and in 1913 additional territory was granted with permission to cut its pulp wood requirements. During 1911 the Gordon Pulp & Paper Co. transferred the residue of the term under its Water Power Lease and all its rights to the Dryden Timber & Power Co. Ltd. The Company carried on logging and lumbering operations during the construction of its dam and pulp mill, 1911 to 1913, then the sawmill was converted into a cutting up mill. The manufacture of kraft pulp and sheathing commenced late in 1913.

In 1918 the Company was re-incorporated as the Dryden Pulp and Paper Co. Ltd. and in that year installed No. 2 Paper Machine and production of kraft paper began in 1919.

In 1920 the Company was again re-incorporated as the DRYDEN PAPER COMPANY LIMITED under Letters Patent dated September 22, 1920.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN TOWN, DISTRICT AND INDUSTRY

The steady growth of the Town and District has grown around the expansion of this pulp and paper industry, which in marking its 56th year of progress, is now employing throughout its entire operation, over 1500 men and women. The combined payrolls exceed $8,800,000 annually.

The Paper Mill when operating at capacity requires approximately 1000 cords of wood per day and has an annual production of 190,000 tons of pulp and paper. The Company's woods operations are so geared they can adequately supply mill requirements from Company limits. However, it has been the policy of the Company to purchase a large supply of settlers' wood from privately-owned lands. During this last season some 70,000 cords of all species were purchased which represents an outlay of $1,300,000 in addition to regular payrolls which, again, bolster the economy of our district.

The faith that has been built into the hearts and minds of employees of the Dryden Paper Company and the citizens of the Town of Dryden is evident in the fact that 75% of the housing units in Dryden are owner-occupied.

It has always been the policy of the Company to generously support all worthwhile projects in the Town and district. These projects have included hospital facilities, assistance to church facilities and for recreation.

Cost of construction of the Company's plant to date is $50,000,000. Recent expansion includes new C. E. Recovery boiler, new Filtration Plant and additional dryers on pulp machine costing approximately $5,000,000. Other improvements for completion in 1967 include No. 4 paper machine speed-up and modernization, improvements to refining capacity and installation of bark burning equipment costing an additional $2,000,000.

Making C.P.R. grain doors, a slack time operation.

PICTURED PROGRESS OF DRYDEN PAPER MILL TO 1966.

Dryden Paper Company's Mill in 1948.

Dryden Paper Mill in 1966, a $50,000,000 plant.

PAPER BAG MAKING INDUSTRY

ST. REGIS CONSOLIDATED PACKING CO. LTD.

The St. Regis Consolidated Packing Co. Ltd. is a modern up-to-date multi-wall bag manufacturing plant built in 1952. Previous to building their own plant, the former St. Regis Paper Co. (Canada) Ltd., rented space in the Dryden Paper Co. plant for their bag manufacturing plant, since 1928.

The new factory, covering 73,000 square feet, is located on the ground formerly occupied by Zentil Merino Company's brick burning kiln and just west of the Dryden Paper mill. The factory has a capacity of three times that of leased up to 1952 and permits the Company's output to keep pace with the industrial and natural resource expansion developments in Canada in general and in western Canada particularly. Space is available for the installation of a third tubing unit and necessary equipment as markets expand.

This Company supplies Ontario and Western Canada with bags for cement, lime, plaster, salt, peat moss, flour, sugar, etc.

The Company employs over 100 persons with a yearly payroll of $300,000.

St. Regis Consolidated Packing Co. Ltd. Plant built in 1952.

THE OLD SWIMMING HOLE

Everyone, I believe, cherishes the memory of those golden years of childhood spent around the old swimming hole. The happy associations and friendships formed while playing in the water or sun-bathing on the sand, spinning yarns or talking of events and happenings appealing to the mind of the child or growing youth are memories never to be forgotten.

To those of us who had the privilege of living in the pioneer days in Dryden there was a spot especially dear, the old swimming hole, which the march of time and progress has changed into a dreary, loathsome, smelly place of sewage, sludge and foam that even a pig would hesitate to wallow in.

This was once a beauty spot with the falls above and the water free to roll and tumble, white with foam, over the rocks, levelling out into a pond, quietly resting for a while before again flowing swiftly down over the rapids beyond the swimming hole. Two bridges spanned the river to the green islands at the foot of the falls, making them easily accessible for fishing from the shore. If you preferred to use a boat, they were available both on the pond and below the rapids, where walleyes, northern pike and perch were plentiful. Suckers by the hundreds came up the river in the spring to spawn in the rapids.

There were few places on the Wabigoon River with its steep banks, where the water was shallow enough for the safety of children who coud not swim, or free of that sticky clay so that you could climb out cleaner than when you went in. There was only one place near the village that answered the purpose. It was on the west side of the river close to the railroad bridge.

Here the steep bank circled farther back leaving a hollow basin of lower ground gradually sloping to the waters edge. The high fill which the C.P.R. had to build as an approach to the bridge was constructed of rock and gravel.

The action of rain and water from melting snow had washed the sand from the gravel, spread it out over quite an area and carried it for some distance out into the river to cover the clay making the beach ideal for wading. The lower ground and hillside beyond the sand was covered with a luxuriant growth of clover for which the district was famous, thus making a nice soft bed for sun bathing. The water was shallow for a short distance out, then the bottom sloped to waist depth about thirty feet from shore, where a large flat boulder made a splendid diving platform. If you went off the far side of the rock you were forced to swim, for the water was beyond depth and the current strong, leading to the rapids below the bridge.

The hours for use of the swimming spot were divided, the mornings for the girls and afternoons for the boys. Mixed bathing was never heard of and would not have been tolerated. The boys were placed on their honor and warned to stay away from the river while the girls were bathing.

We had no bathing suits. We were supposed to wear our knee-

length trousers, but more often than not, we swam in our birthday suits until the Village Fathers caught us and then inserted a clause in By-law 87 prohibiting bathing in the nude. How the girls ever managed to swim without becoming entangled in those long dresses which we saw them carrying under their arms as they started for the swimming hole, was a matter of conjecture. Possibly they resorted to "skin diving", like the boys.

I hope that the day may come when some of the original beauty may be restored to the river bed below the falls. This could be done with a concrete wall lining a spillway for the clear water from above, a flume or pipe buried deep to carry the sewage, mill-waste, foam and smell away down the river below the rapids. Then the unsightly sludge and waste could be covered with earth and sown to grass and planted with trees.

Swimming Pool, corner Van Horne and Arthur. Built 1966.

After the old swimming hole became unfit for use because of mill waste and Town sewage, bathing moved to a pool just above the Youth Center, formed by a dam across the spillway that was blasted out in 1898 for a bypass for the river water while the first dam was being built. A depth of sand was spread for a bottom and running water fed into the pool by a 12" pipe across Duke Street and released by a gate in the dam.

Health authorities found this pool to be unsanitary and ordered it closed. Bathing was moved to the open river across Duke Street. Again complaints were heard that this spot was dangerous from traffic and unsafe for bathing. Agitation started for an uptown outdoor swimming pool with the result that a vote on a bylaw for $75,000. debenture issue carried in 1965 and in 1966 the Town has an outdoor swimming pool built at a cost of $90,000.

Wabigoon's Oldest Buildings Being Demolished
(Relics of the 1896 Manitou gold rush.)

MANITOU MINING BOOM 1896-97

The whisper that gold had been found was always exciting and wherever it was heard urged miners and prospectors to rush to discover its source in the hope of making a fortune overnight. The rush carried with it a stream of humanity hoping to get in on the ground floor and profit from the many necessities and requirements of a mining town. Possibly it was that which led John R. Lumby, a young Englishman with a literary turn of mind, to Wabigoon, the nearest point on the C.P.R. to the mining town from where all its supplies were unloaded and transported. The prospect of Wabigoon's future led him to believe it would be an excellent place to start the first newspaper in the district. So he purchased a printing press, rented an upper room in the C.P.R. station, gathered the news, set the type by hand and fed the first edition of the Wabigoon Star into the hand-powered press on May 12th, 1897.

It may have been the same golden whisper that caused Joe Osborne to be in Wabigoon in 1901 when Mr. Lumby wished to sell to move to Fort William to become editor of the Times-Journal. Anyway, he became the second editor and publisher. Following in the footsteps of the former editor, to do his own news gathering, operate a one-man printing establishment and keep the plant on its feet was a strenuous job, requiring long hours of work. I recall when Mr. Osborne came up from Wabigoon to gather news and attend council meetings in the evening. He invariably went to sleep, dozed

Joe Osborne Editor 1901-1919

through the meeting then had to go to the clerk for a copy of the proceedings. He rendered a valuable service to the new settlement with his editorials and used the full power of the press to mold public opinion on problems and decisions of those early days. He published the paper in Wabigoon until the boom began to wane and word of other gold strikes drew the miners away from Gold Rock. Dryden at that time was a growing centre with a large farming area and prospects of a pulp mill being located here so to get nearer the source of the news and possibly a better future for his paper, he loaded his press and equipment into a box car and moved up, changing the name of the publication to the Dryden Observer and Star.

MORE AT HOME

It was perhaps fitting or possibly the Press felt more at home in its first two locations in Dryden when it was placed in buildings where the material in their construction came from business places taken down in Wabigoon and moved to Dryden. Its first location was in the building now occupied by George's Taxi on King Street, opposite the Fire Hall, torn down, moved here, then reconstructed by Jas. McFadyen. Fortunately this building had a window large enough to be removed and admit the hand-powered, hand-fed press and the stands containing the type, without making a hole in the wall.

Shortly after the plant was moved, Margaret Allen, a Scottish lass direct from Aberdeen, arrived in Dryden. Assisting with the type setting was her first job in Canada and for a short period before the business was sold in 1919 she edited the paper. The hand-power that first turned the press for the weekly edition in Dryden still resides here. Leslie Orvis did the job and later assisted with type setting at $2.00 per week.

SPILLING THE NEWS

Leslie tells the story of how the news had to be reset. The racks which held the type were set on stands that were high enough to be convenient for work either standing or sitting on a high stool. Mr. Osborne, a short heavy set man, was one day busily engaged setting type for the next issue when he stepped down off the stool to get some just beyond his reach. Charlie Harris, another young helper at that time, moved the stool. When Joe backed up to resume his high seat he took a low one on the floor with a resounding thump. The shock spilled the frame and scattered the type which had to be reset. There were some large emphatic words floating around that did not get into that edition of the paper.

STILL PURSUED

Financial difficulties still pursued the business. Rental, fuel, wages for additional help, etc. nearly caused its failure and for a short time ownership passed into the hands of Jas. McFadyen and Ralph Pronger with Charlie Henson as editor. In the same year, 1919, it again changed ownership and John W. Collison a man with unusual writing ability became editor. He operated in the McFadyen building for a short time then I was given the job of moving the old press out and in through the window into its second home in a former Wabigoon building on the corner of Queen and Whyte, then owned by Alfred Pitt. The east half of the building was occupied by the New Dryden Jobbing, owned and managed by Frank Foulis. The building was formerly a liquor store in Wabigoon owned by Mr. McNea. He hired Dave Anderson to pull it down, move the material, and rebuild it in Dryden. I helped him during the reconstruction.

New Dryden Jobbing Building, Corner of Queen and Whyte, Former McNea Liquor Store, Wabigoon, demolished and resurrected in Dryden.

THE POWER OF THE PRESS

The newspaper plays an important role in the life of a community. The editor through the medium of his editorials can do much to mold public opinion on questions and topics of the day. He may declare his paper independent, report the news carefully and unbiased but through the wording of an editorial you may read between the lines the drift of his political leaning. By the "freedom of the press" he may censor or rearrange the wording of an article, misspell a word, or misplace a line in the printing so that the original meaning of the article is lost. The moral of this story is don't argue with the editor for he can always have the last word.

BECAME TIRED

Mr. Collison soon became tired of picking up the type with tweezers and setting it by hand. He purchased a linotype machine. Even with this second-hand machine his troubles were not over. He had difficulty to keep the type running smoothly. One very cold morning in the winter he called me to help him make some adjustment for the type had stuck, the building was cold and the lead wouldn't melt properly. He was rubbing his hands, fretting and fuming because the paper was going to be delayed. Mr. Pitt was unfortunate enough to come in at this time with his weekly advertisement. Mr. Collison immediately took him to task because the furnace wasn't working properly. He had a large pail of gasoline standing on the floor for use in the machine and said "look it's so cold in here that even gasoline won't burn." With that he struck a match and threw it blazing into the gas where it immediately went out. Mr. Pitt jumped, threw up his hands and said "You crazy fool, you could have blown us all up!" J. W. replied "The way I feel right now it would not have mattered, we would at least have went to a warmer place."

The next home of the press was in the first post office building, now the stationery store of the Alex Wilson Publications. In 1924 I again moved Mr. Collison with same old press, linotype machine and equipment, but this time I had to cut a hole in the wall to admit them. At this time the name of the paper was changed. The Star was dropped to become simply the Dryden Observer. In 1926 Mr. Collison grew tired of the struggle to keep the paper going and decided to try his luck at some other vocation. He moved to Kenora and his wife became manager-in-chief. "Toots" as she was known, with the assistance of Art Foster, did a very good job until December 1940 when she announced that the business had been sold to Alex Wilson, a young man from the staff of the Winnipeg Tribune.

Alex possessed an agressive business ability that drove him and his staff on to success. The old press was soon discarded, new machines were purchased. The old post office building became too small and the adjoining mill hall was bought to house the expanding plant. With his brothers, Jim and Roy, he formed the Alex Wilson Publications Ltd., a firm that has become nationally known for its high grade color printing.

The additional space acquired by the purchasing of the mill hall had also become too crowded for convenience so the operation has been moved into a new modern building on Colonization Ave.

Wilson's modern $250,000 plant on Colonization Ave.

In recent years the Observer has earned over 20 awards in national newspaper competitions. The Company has also won over 25 awards for excellence in folder production. In July 1965, their latest accomplishment was to be presented with the Ontario Government's "A" for Achievement Award by Hon. G. C. Wardrope, Provincial Mines Minister, acting on behalf of Hon. S. J. Randall, Minister of Economics & Development, whose Department makes the awards of which 19 have been distributed in the past three years.

The award consisted of the presentation of a symbolic "A" Pennant which now proudly flies over the A.W.P. plant and a framed certificate. The "A" Achievement Award to companies which have increased exports, replaced imports, developed new products or increased production facilities or conducted an outstanding research program.

"The Company" Mr. Wardrope commented "has increased the Canadian content of its products by replacing imported raw materials to the value of $557,500 in 1963 and replaced imported machine tools and equipment with Canadian products valued at more than $62,000 in 1963."

W. W. HOWELL, SCRIBE & JOURNALIST

In the early years of 1900 there came to Minnitaki, W. W. Howell, a young English school teacher who located on a homestead, built a log house and stable and proceeded to make a home for himself and family on a farm that was then scrub and bushland. Inexperienced and unskilled in the methods of farming in a new country he had to learn the hard way by trial and error. However, with that bulldog tenacity inbred in most decendants of the English race, he survived and is now in his ninety fifth year, hale and hearty, with a mind so clear that he is the envy of many a younger person.

A LONG JOURNALISTIC RECORD

Mr. Howell has advised me that his first association with The Dryden Observer began in 1904 when it was known as The Wabigoon Star and edited by Joe Osborne. He started writing at the suggestion of Mr. Osborne, as a local correspondent. It was not until in the 1930's that he began heading his articles under his own name. In 1928 he wrote a column twice a month for the Port Arthur News Chronicle headed "Potato Patch" by "Irish Cobbler". He made use of a natural literary ability and began a series of articles which have continued off and on down through the years covering a variety of subjects and current events.

On May 1, 1936, he wrote an article on "Mechanical Existence" which by its indicated tone, W. W. must have been peeved at "Mr. Townie" or for some reason had a chip on his shoulder while writing.

This article appealed to me particularly, so now as a surprise for my friend W. W. and for old times sake I wish to have a portion of the article reprinted.

A MECHANICAL EXISTENCE

Now along comes Townie. Never mind who he is, you will find him in every town and city, but not on the farm. Townie objects to my remark that the people of the cities lead a "mechanical existence". He says that far from such a state, the townsman leads a full and complete life, and attempts to turn the tables on me by saying that for a dull, monotonous, dead-to-the-world life, you can't beat the farm life. "Why" he says, "your existence is not much above that of the horses, cows, or even the pigs," though he is careful to add, "I mean no offence by this remark. You eat, sleep and work, and then go the round again, and call that living. Look at us in the town," he continues, "nice clean streets and sidewalks to travel over, not muddy lanes; electric lights in the streets, stores and houses, movie shows, dance halls, art galleries, all to make life easy,

comfortable and enjoyable."

Now Townie, do you ever stop to figure out how you and your kind look to the man on the farm? Possibly not, your ideas are inbred and every farmer knows that too much inbreeding brings disaster. Your town life is all laid out for you. You do such and such a thing because everyone else does it. You don't do certain things because no one else does them. Step off that beaten track and people will talk about you and crash goes all your social ambitions. You are emphatically the slaves of the clock. You must be at mill or the factory or the store when the whistle or siren or bell goes. You work steadily at your task till the whistle goes and you break for lunch. The whistle calls you back again and the whistle dismisses you from your task of attending the machine or whatever the work may be. If you are not a mechanic or worker, it is just the same. The farmer may be slow in thinking, but he usually has lots of time to turn things over in his mind and draw his own conclusions and against that kind the professional agitator has no chance. Townie, do you ever hear of a poet raving about the beauties of a street, (I don't mean human beauties, I admit you have plenty of them) does he go into ecstacies over a store window, or a police station or even a hospital? No, he comes to the fields and the meadow to seek inspiration, and that is where the best on earth is to be found.

You say ours is a dull monotonous round, only eat, sleep and work, well listen to this and call it what you like, but it is the life.

Down on the farm 'bout half past four
I slip on my pants and sneak out the door,
Out in the yard I run like the dickens
To milk all the cows and feed all the chickens
Clean out the barnyard, clean Dolly and Jiggs
Separate the cream and slop all the pigs.
Hustle two hours then eat like a turk,
By heck I am ready for a full days work.
Then I grease the wagon, and put on the rack,
Throw a jug of water in the old grain sack,
Hitch up the horses, slip down the lane,
Must get the hay in, looks like rain.
Look over yonder, sure as I'm born,
Cows on the rampage, hogs in the corn.
Start across the meadow, run a mile or two,
Heaving like I'm wind broken, get wet through.
Back to the horses, then for recompense,
Dolly gets astraddle the barbwire fence.

Joints all aching, muscles in a jerk,
Whoop! Fit as a fiddle for a full day's work.
Work all summer till winter is nigh,
Then figure at the bank and hear a big sigh:
Worked all year and didn't make a thing,
Less cash now than I had last spring.
Some folks say there ain't no hell,
Shucks! They never farmed, how can they tell.
When spring rolls round I take another chance,
As fuzz grows longer on my old gray pants.
Give my galluses a hitch, my belt another jerk,
By gosh, I'm ready for a full year's work.

AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN MAGAZINE

The Northwestern Ontario Sportsman, Alex M. Wilson, Publisher and D. Edward Scott, Editor, was Canada's leading sportsman's magazine. Published monthly, designed to be of service to tourists and visitors and to promote goodwill, understanding and friendship with our American friends. This purpose was well served from the first edition January, 1946, until publication was discontinued in 1955 when Mr. Scott returned to his former vocation of teacher in the high school.

The Editor, Mr. Scott, had made the Northwestern Ontario sportsland his home for 16 years while teaching in the Dryden High School. During this period he had visited almost every part of it and spent much of his leisure time in its woods and on its lakes.

Mr. Scott is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario. His knowledge of the outdoors was reflected in the columns of the Sportsman as well as in the Dryden Observer which he edited during the same period.

Tourist Bureau & Museum, The Museum, Ontario's first west of Fort William.

DAYS OF SPORT

From the start of the settlement Dryden was a community of sport enthusiasts. Competitions of all kinds were arranged for Dominion Day and picnics in the old park. Among those competitions were canoe and swimming races, log burling, walking the greasy pole, tub races, catching a greasy pig, baseball and football games.

Water sports were held on the river shore of the old park now buried by the progress of passing years by the Wood office and long wood conveyor of the D. P. C. Baseball and football were nightly games on the school ground on Van Horne Ave. from which district champions were developed. Then after a track was built around the agricultural grounds, horse racing, from the slow race in which the jockey rode the opponents horse that had to beat his own in order to win, to trotting and the fast running race.

Billy French, an old time jockey, was always agitating for a horse race, and even had racing sulkeys brought in for the purpose. Considerable rivalry and betting was worked up over which was the fastest horse, Bill Kerney's gray mare or Dr. Blair's beautiful little bay. Dr. Blair thought too much of his horse to think of putting it in a race. It was not until after he retired and sold his horse to Pat Cavanaugh, an engineer on the construction of the mill dam in 1912, that the race was on and all bets settled. Memory has forgotten the winner.

Bill Kerney, Central Hotel Manager, racing his gray mare against Bill Cavanaugh's bay, formerly owned by Dr. Blair, 1912.

DRYDEN BASEBALL TEAM

Champions of the Lake of the Woods League, 1908, and winners of the Shragg Cup. Back row: E. G. Rognon, F. Stone, H. Wilde, Dr. Blair, next two unnamed, Wm. Turnbull. Centre row: E. Goodwin, Andrew Hutchison, Edgar Turnbull, mascot, A. G. Ripley, J. McPhail. Front row: Ed. Cole, Hugh Adair, H. Thompson.

DRYDEN FOOTBALL TEAM 1909

District Champions: Back row: Wm. Mooney, Geo. Mooney, Louis Rutter, Dave George, Gurney Coates. Third row; Albert Vice, John Wrathwell, Bob Coates. Second row: Albert Berry, Roy Best. Front row: Geo. Wice, Dave Mooney.

SKATING RINKS AND HOCKEY

The first skating rink was on natural ice out on the bleak cold river, for at that time there was no other way of making ice in a more suitable place than by dipping water from a hole chopped through the river ice, with a pail on the end of a rope and dumping it into barrels, and drawn on a jumper or sleigh to where it was required. This was the method employed to deliver in the village for washing purposes at 25c per barrel. It was a cold sloppy method of delivery. A block or float was placed on the water with a canvas spread over the top of the barrel and held by a hoop to help prevent too much loss and away you went slopping and splashing to your destination, arriving with about three parts of the quantity and a very icy sleigh. You were lucky to have that amount for often a sudden slide slew upset the whole load and your temper as well.

No thought was given to use the barrel method to make skating ice, in fact it was not until after the turn of the century that a rink was thought of at all and then only when a boy was given a pair of skates for Christmas. He and his pals wished to try them out, so with shovels they headed for the river and cleared a circular strip with an island of snow in the center. This new sport proved so popular that after a few falls and hard bumps, their parents received no peace until there was at least one pair of skates for family use.

THE OLD FASHIONED SKATE

The old-fashioned spring skate was adjustable to several widths of boots, but not lengths. This allowed a pair to be used by different members of a family or loaned to a friend within the age group. They were sold as small, medium and large. Where economy forced the parents to a limit of one pair, the youngest member would be seen with the skate protruding an inch or so beyond the boot while an older one using the same pair would go stubbing along with the boot that much or more longer than the skate. This was awkward and required extra care in balance or it resulted in a bad fall by striking the nose of the skate on the ice. A spring lever with an eccentric arrangement spread the front clips, and, when closed on the runner of the skate under the instep, clamped the skate to the sole of the boot. Two more clips on each side of the heel plate held it in position there. Slotted holes for bolts that held the toe clamps to the eccentric arrangement made the adjustment to a larger boot possible. A strap tightly buckled over the toe and another from the heel around the ankle secured the skate more firmly to the boot.

THE FIRST SKATING RINK

The rink was located on the east side of the river just south of the dock. An open bonfire was used for warmth while putting on the skates or warming cold fingers or toes. Unlined leather boots were not much protection against below zero weather more especially after wearing two pairs of heavy socks, moccasins or shoe packs. Keeping the rink on the river clear involved a great deal of work for there was no protection from storms or drifting snow.

It could be shovelled clean for one night's skating and possibly, by the next, be filled again. The boys started it and toughed it out for the first season then adults became interested in skating and gave some help. Better shelter was obtained by use of a boathouse for a waiting room and a box stove for heat. There were plenty of cracks for the wind and snow to whistle through and although the stove was red hot at times, the heat could not be felt far from it. You had to keep turning like a chicken being barbecued, warming one side while you cooled the other. Mr. Amos Orvis was hired as caretaker to assist in flooding the ice, keeping it clear of snow and the fire burning. A small charge was made for a season ticket. The river ice was used until later than 1910.

An event looked forward to was a cold open fall when the river and lake froze deep enough to carry, and very little snow fell. We could then skate for miles out onto the lake on a moonlight night.

THE SECOND RINK

The next skating rink was made in the down town area between King and Princess Streets just behind the Coulter building. Dryden's first theatre on the location now being used by Eaton's store. One of the reasons for choosing this spot was that the ground was fairly level and sheltered by surrounding buildings. Progress had been made by this time over the barrel method of moving water. A tank had been built for Marsh Tuck, the local drayman, which had a capacity of approximately five barrels and could be used either on a sleigh or wagon although it still had to be filled by the strong arm method. It could be emptied from a valve and hose at the rear but still a slow and expensive way of building and flooding the ice. The village had now grown and been incorporated into a town. With more skaters using the rink and the cost of a season ticket increased, more revenue was obtained which helped to make both ends meet.

Posts were set around the rink to support a six foot slab fence and taller ones from which electric lights were hung. A shack was

built for a dressing room and heated with a stove where the skaters might retire to warm and rest. Hockey was now starting to be played by the boys, although the rink was far from regulation size. The snow shoveled over the fence while cleaning the ice made a good cold grand stand for the spectators to watch the game.

THE THIRD RINK

When the Albert Street school was built in 1922 a water line was laid on Arthur leading to it from a pumping station at the river. Here was a modern way to make ice, so the material was moved to another location south of Arthur Street and west of Whyte Ave. A small pipe line and hydrant were dug in to bring the water nearer the rink and a small shed built over the hydrant to keep it free of snow. Much the same construction was followed as used in the former rink. The building used for the convenience of the skaters had a sheltered area similar to a house verandah where the spectators might gather for hockey games with a little more protection than standing outside the fence on the snowbanks.

VETERANS OF THE HOCKEY GAME

To name some of the players who played hockey in this rink and organized the first games with out of town teams the following veterans of the game come to mind: J. S. Wilson, Ernest Dickson, Tom and Jack Foote, Earnest and Mike Loutit, Alex Duncan, Bert Blair, Joe Richan. Then not to forget Dusty Warren, the keenest sport of them all, who, by the way, had the honor of being decorated for bravery in World War I, in Saskatoon 1919, by the Prince of Wales. Dusty was an allround sport, played hockey, baseball and a curler who was hard to beat.

THE FOURTH RINK

Because the ice heaved very badly on the low-lying spot south of Arthur Street and required continual flooding to remove the cracks and keep the surface in condition for skating, a better location was sought. The old ravine filled with sawdust from Wm. McMillan's sawmill where the curling rink now stands was then thought to be ideal for surely there would be no frost action over all that depth of sawdust.

Johnny Wilson, then manager of the Dryden Paper Co., and an old hockey player, owned the property at that time. He donated the land to the club and the skating fans went in for a more pretentious out-door rink with the ice surrounded by a tight board fence. A two storey waiting room was built on the side of the rink where

hockey games could be watched in comfort through the windows and included two dressing rooms for convenience of hockey players or skaters.

The King Coin space now used for laundry was the unit built as a start toward a closed-in rink to be added to as the club could afford the expense. It was purchased by Newt. Brignall and moved to its present location on King to make room for the Memorial Arena.

The Memorial Arena building was purchased when airplane hangars became available for sale through the War Assets Board. The late Lloyd Bruce promoted the idea. Wm. Avers demolished the hangar at Brandon, shipped the material by rail, and oversaw its erection here.

MEMORIAL ARENA

Financing the arena was a problem solved by leading citizens of the Dryden Athletic & Recreation Association. The ratepayers turned down sale of debentures but approved a suggestion by Allan Durance for a public subscription plan. Public spirited citizens, the Dryden Paper Co and business organizations donated generously and got the plan away to a good start. The first drive in 1947 realized $45,000, then in July 1948 when funds were running short a second drive realized $33,270. Sale of surplus materials not required brought another $14,000.

The cost of hangar in 1940 of the type purchased was $120,000. In 1948 its value stood at $180,000. When the arena was under construction, the Curling Club agitated for an addition to cover four sheets of curling ice in order to have the sports at one center, Adding the value of the curling rink made a total asset value when the arena was opened in 1948 of $210,000.

The Memorial Arena and Curling Rink in 1966 contains a regulation size hockey rink and six sheets of curling ice, all games played on artificial ice, adding an approximate cost of $40,000 to the value.

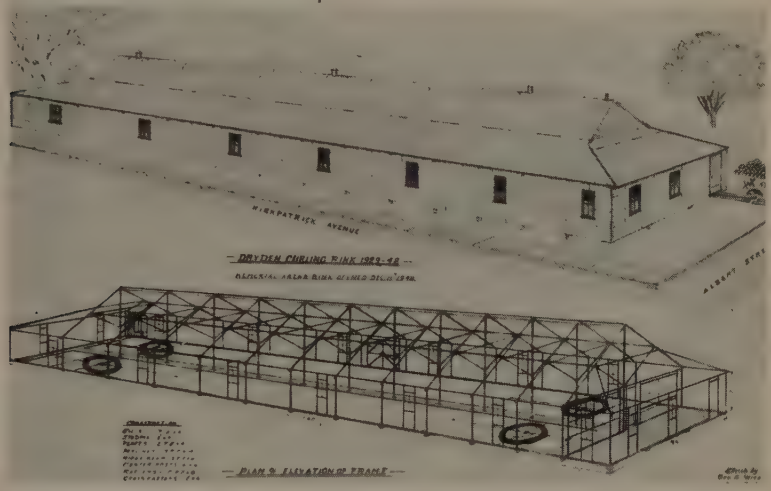
EARLY DAYS OF CURLING

In 1929 there were a few curlers in town who were missing the game because there was no rink nearer than Kenora. Jack Fowlie, then manager of the Royal Bank, was the prime mover and agitator in forming a Curling Rink Co., offering shares at $50.00 each to finance the building of a rink. These shares were sold to any one who could be persuaded to buy, and it was soon found that having the rink owned by a company instead of the Club was not a very good idea. The non-curling minority of the shareholders were soon demanding a return on their investment which the young club was not in a position to pay. A dividend was not struck for three years. Some of the curling shareholders refused to accept any profit in their investment, asking that it be used to purchase shares in the name of the club so that the building would be eventually owned by it.

Some twenty five hundred dollars was promised by sale of shares and the building started in the early fall, with Tom Graham in charge of construction. He had built and erected the trusses, when the work had to be shut down until cash could be collected to pay for materials purchased.

C. Peterson, an engineer working for the Dryden Paper Co. at

that time, designed the trusses and drew the plans for the building and he believed in strength. It is common practice to span two sheets of ice with a light truss without any centre support now-a-days, but those heavy trusses framed of 8" x 8" timber supported with a row of posts down the centre and spaced at 12 ft. apart, appeared strong enough to carry a locomotive engine.. They were set on an eight ft. wall which made a low ceiling for the length of the building giving it a dingy appearance inside. Windows with four lights spaced between the trusses were a target for snowballs by passing school children in the winter while stones, used during the summer broke most of the panes.



Old Curling Rink corner of Kirkpatrick and Albert, 1929-48. Cost $2500.

The ground was quicksand which absorbed the fall rains and caused continual heaving of the ice. The ice was always in condition to test the ability of the skips to read it. It changed every few days. Often after flooding and getting it in almost perfect condition the weather would turn cold over night, then old Jack Frost would heave it again before a game had been played. This gave a skip such as Dusty Warren, who could quickly read the ice after a rock had been thrown with a turn to either side of the house, a big advantage over one that could not pick it up but had to be guided by the opposing skip's play, especially so when the broom had been placed a foot or more on the opposite side of a rock to allow for the fall and the rock played against the turn. This was very confusing to the beginner who often threw the wrong turn.

A VERY COLD RINK

It was often colder inside the rink than out in the open. There was no lumber or insulation behind the outside covering, and the galvanized iron added to the intense cold. It did not fit too closely at the joints. When the wind blew it would whistle through every crack carrying in the drifting snow. Often the ice had to be swept to remove the drifts while a game was in progress. Then when the sun shone the iron drew the heat. The condensation which had gathered in the underside from games played the night before would melt, run down the iron to the purlines then drip to the ice below causing five rows of knobs one-half inch high and about 4" apart the whole length of the sheet. It would require two hours of hard pushing with an ice scraper to remove the knobs before a game could be played. Sometimes when the weather was mild the drip continued during the game requiring the constant use of the scraper.

A wood burning camp stove taking a 36" stick was used to warm the waiting room. A galvanized tank holding about 40 gallons of water and made to fit the circle of the stove was used to heat the water for dressing the ice. The hot water was spread on the ice from a barrel set on a sleigh with wooden runners. Two six foot lengths of pipe with one-eighth holes drilled every 4", fitted into a tee and valve attached to the barrel, spread the water the width of the sheet.

GREEN CURLERS

There were only a few in Dryden who had curled before, when the rink was opened. These were elected skips to coach the squad of beginners how to deliver the rocks at the broom so that they would curl to where they were wanted at the other end of the sheet. Some of these beginners with a natural ability to curl were chosen to fill the slate of skips, and soon improved so that they could win over those who had taught them.

Twenty rinks were all that could be accommodated to allow each to play two games per week. Four of these were ladies. Interest was keen in the new sport and membership full from the beginning. The waiting room was lined with spectators each evening playing every shot from behind the glass where they never lost a game. If a rink was short of a player names of those who wished to play were drawn from a hat.

FRIENDLY VISITS

Kenora was much interested in our new club and friendly visits of three or four rinks at a time were exchanged between the clubs two or three times each season. A. R. Hutchison donated a cup to

be played for during these visits which was seldom held by either club for any length of time. It was an experience for me on my first visit to their rink. It was on the second floor of the Boating Club building. I then could understand why curling was called the "Roaring Game". The played rocks made so much noise passing along over the ice on the wooden floor that it was impossible to hear the direction of your skip. They all had to be given by signal.

EARLY BONSPIELS

Our curling season from the beginning always wound up with a mixed or novelty bonspiel with three competitions. It was possible for one rink to win all three before they were restricted to winning one only.

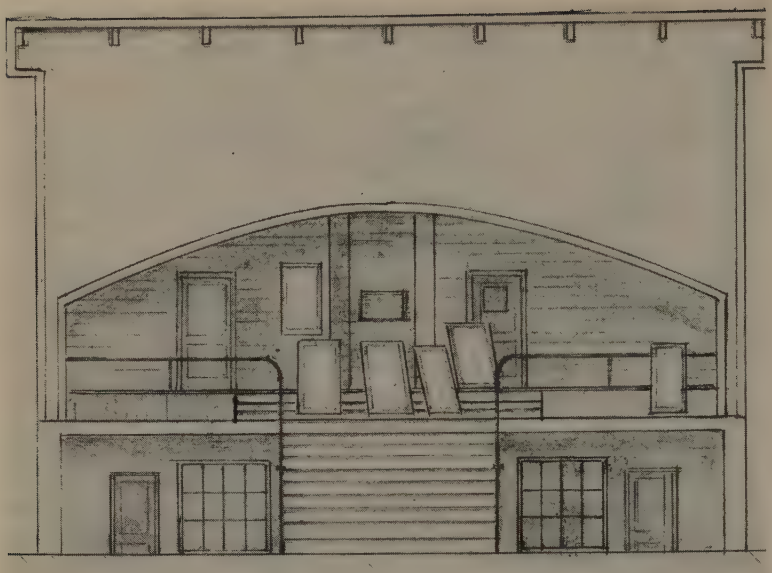
Playing in all events caused a delay in the draw, for a rink winning in one could not be scheduled to play two games at the same time. This was demonstrated one year when Herman Sanders with his wife playing third rock won all three and the fourth prize for the aggregate. The finals required them to play six hours of continuous curling. Herman at that time was counted one of our better curlers, a real draw-shot master. He appeared to be able to draw to the button whenever he wished to cut out all counters against him.

With only two sheets of ice and three open competitions those 'spiels were a long-drawn-out affair, often requiring three weeks of play.

NEW CURLING RINK A BUSY PLACE

The new curling rink attached to the Memorial Arena was ready for the curling season of 1948. At that time there were four sheets of natural ice. Applications to play the "Roaring Game" increased until in 1964 two additional sheets were added and all sheets converted to artificial ice, still all those who wish to play cannot be accommodated.

The ladies use the ice for two afternoons and two evening draws a week, school boys and girls are given a chance to learn Saturday mornings. Saturday afternoon and evenings are alloted to Mixed Curling when not rented to Service Clubs and Town organizations who wish to compete in bonspiel play among themselves. An open bonspiel is held annually, last year being the 15th since the opening of the new rink. Rinks from the Dryden Ladies' and Men's Clubs are able to hold their own in outside competition and have brought home many prizes, while school boy rinks skipped by Ray and Don Cook and Ken Davis Jr., have come very close to winning the Dominion championship.



The Coulter Building, Dryden's first public hall and picture theatre in the silent movie days. Built 1910.

DRYDEN'S THEATRES

A. W. Coulter, a brother of Mrs. Swan Swanson, constructed the original building about 1911 or '12 for a public hall. Back in the days of the silent film, Mr. Coulter started Dryden's first picture show in it. Marshall Bailey was the operator, then purchased the equipment and carried on there for sometime before he built the first Strand Theatre on Earl Ave. The basement was used for a bowling alley and pool room. Some years later Dunc Reid moved in for his fourth location of a barber shop to operate the alley and tables along with barbering.

The public hall was not a financial success. An advertisement in the June 26, 1913 issue of the Observer & Star states that Mr. Coulter was an estate, commission and insurance agent and when he decided to leave Dryden the building was purchased by the Dryden Paper Co. so that Dryden might continue to have an entertainment hall.

Disaster struck in the spring of 1934 when the building was destroyed by fire leaving it a blackened ruin. Water destroyed the pool tables and bowling alley in the basement. The fire started inside the building at night and spread through the building before it was discovered. Very little of the contents were removed. A large num-

ber of forms built for seats in the Chatauqua tent on the annual visit of the show to Dryden and equipment belonging to the 1st Troop of Boy Scouts stored in the building were burned.

The Dryden Paper Co. with its usual generosity and interest for the welfare of Dryden's citizens lost no time in preparing to rebuild the hall. Mr. C. P. Peterson of Winnipeg, who was construction engineer at the mill, designed the quadrantal type of truss to span the building to give an open floor space and drew the plans for the new building as it stands today. He had piers built outside the old foundation wall to support the roof trusses and made the building somewhat longer for more room. The additional length was not excavated for basement at that time. The late Geo. Noble Sr. and his helper "Whiskey Mike" built the crazy-quilt pattern of brickwork for the front. To lay those brick to the satisfaction of Mr. Peterson was a headache and a real jig-saw puzzle. I well remember the disgust and emphatic language, used by George Noble in trying to lay them to the pattern while Mike expressed his in Italian. That type of brick-laying was a hobby of Mr. Peterson's as it was again used when he built the house for Dr. Morrison now owned by Lorne McKenzie. George said "only an educated fool would want brick laid in that style."

Oscar Kurz built an addition on the south end later for more room and storage space and his workmen burrowed underneath the former extension to complete the basement. During the Second World War, I built an addition for the Company on the east side for the Red Cross workers for the collection of clothing and packing of overseas parcels. The new building was used for many purposes. It was used for a drill hall and storage of army equipment during World War Two. Recreation and reading rooms were in the basement. The public library occupied the Red Cross addition after the war and later moved up on the platform for cloakrooms over the main entrance. Before the building of the new high school the students went down there for physical training periods. Then to bring its history up to date the whole building was acquired by the Alex Wilson Publications Ltd. a number of years ago to take care of the requirements of their ever expanding printing establishment and finally to have the hole punched in the wall to allow them to move their large presses out to more commodious quarters in their new modern building on Colonization Ave.

Dryden Billiard Hall, Wm. Wilson, Prop. and first Strand Theatre, Marshall Bailey, Prop., on Earl Ave., north of Queen, 1913. (Note) The Star theatre operated in the Mill Hall till it burned after Mr. Bailey moved.

New Strand Theatre on King Street, Opened 1953.

Royal Theatre on Queen Street, an $85,000 building in 1951.

DRYDEN INVENTIONS
CEMENT BLOCK MACHINE INVENTED IN DRYDEN

Invention of a cement block machine in 1908 by Ben Blair, a Dryden resident, was possibly the first of its kind, for it caused considerable comment both in Canada and the United States. The invention was one that raised many possibilities for the use of cement by moulding it beforehand ready for easy and quick construction for whatever use might be required.

Ben Blair's cement block machine, 1908. Picture posed outside Gordon Bros. bank. Friends left to right; Bill Kerney Sr., Wm. Turnbull, Edgar Turnbull, Mr. Blair, Tom Thompson, Tom Proudfoot, Dr. Blair, J. Robinson.

Cement at that time was just coming into general use for construction purposes other than as a mortar for bonding stone and brick. When it was first used in Dryden the skeptics questioned how one bag of the powder could cement a pile of gravel eight or nine times its size into a hardened lump that could carry the weight of a building, and stand the test of time.

The machine when first invented was not large. Only one block could be made at a time. A lever on an eccentric controlled the expansion of the box-like affair so that the sides could be clamped tightly to the ends for filling then after the cement was mixed and well tamped into it the machine could be expanded to lift easily off the cement block so that it could be put away to set and dry while more were being made. The core which formed the hole in the center of the block was slightly wedge-shape for removal after the block had hardened.

THE JOHNSON SKIDDER

Contractors have shown keen interest in the Johnson Skidder and bush operations have been revolutionized as the result of the invention in 1956 of a Dryden man, Henry A. Johnson. His patented Johnson Skidder is capable of swamping from 50 to 150 cords of wood per day depending on conditions and distance. It is intended for use in moving pulpwood from wood cutters' piles to truck haul roads.

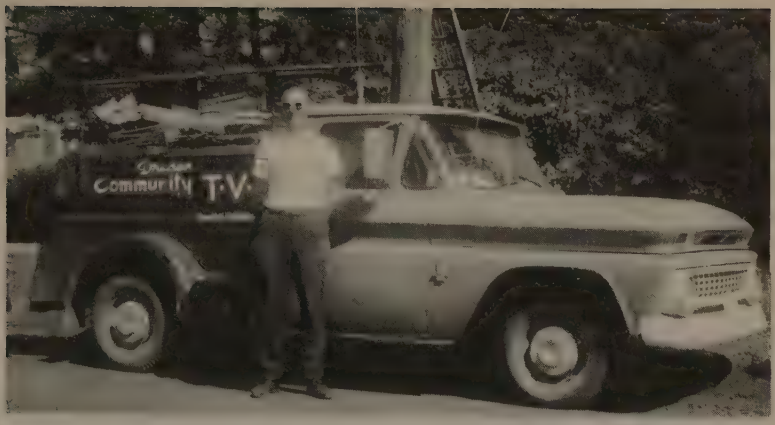
The Johnson Skidder is attachable to any tractor over 60 h.p. It is attached to the rear of the tractor and does not interfere with the bulldozer blade at the front end. The skidder will carry up to one cord of wood at a time and is used for swamping operations up to a quarter mile. It can be attached to a tractor in a half hour and removed in 15 minutes. It is operated hydraulically.

The idea was conceived in Henry's mind. He made the drawings and completely built the unit in his own work shop. The first model was not successful, errors were quickly improved so that the skidder has now become a necessary machine for bush work.

DRYDEN COMMUNITY TELEVISION

Roy Orvis and Phil Johnson pioneered TV Cable in Dryden. Roy, keenly interested in radio as a school boy, his inventive mind has since led him to obtain the first television receptions in Dryden in 1952. By using antennas a long way up on top a 150 ft. tower, erected by himself and partner Phil Johnson, without the aid of a dragline, they obtained the first signal in 1955 delivered to TV receivers.

Their first antenna array was erected in 1957 on its present site



Roy Orvis and the Community Television truck.

on the high rock at the end of Colonization Ave. Obtaining permission from the Town to use their pole line, they began construction of a cable system in 1954.

Large yagi arrays for long distance TV reception were the largest of that type built in Canada. Antennas were built in other centers from plans furnished by Roy. Differential fading units to re-establish the balance between video and sound which is lost in long distance reception, were developed in Dryden and are used on all TV channels except the local CBC. Units of this type of equipment are now built both in Canada and the U.S.A. for use by cable systems. The circuits used in these are not changed greatly from the 1958 prototype.

Radio amplifiers for cable use with automatic level control were first developed in Dryden for use on the Dryden cable system. This unit is now also produced in the U.S.A. Several suggestions from Dryden have been incorporated in products manufactured for use by cable systems. Being one of the early Canadian systems put them in a good position for developing innovations. Tests starting in 1962 in reception of color programming from the U.S.A. showed that no modification of the system was required for color.

The cable system has been rebuilt over the last three years to use the modern aluminum jacketed cable and recently developed amplifiers which are capable of carrying up to twelve TV channels plus the entire FM broadcast band. FM radio stations recently added to the system have proved very popular and more FM stations are to be added.

Roy has done trouble shooting and system planning for other cable systems both in Canada and the United States.

The engines of the late nineties were of similar type to the Countess of Dufferin, now holding a place of honor in front of the C.P.R. station in Winnipeg. They came puffing along, belching smoke from their inverted bell-shaped stacks, pulling a train of 25 or 30 cars, getting stalled and having to divide the train to climb a small grade. They were toys compared with the modern diesel with a string of upwards of 100 large steel cars holding twice their capacity.

That particular type of smoke stack was good for forming smoke rings which, in dry weather, would go floating up, one after another, with each puff of the engine. The rings were quite a display to watch until they faded out in the distance. They were regarded as an omen for a spell of dry weather.

Keeping the pressure of steam up in the boiler was a job for the fireman with his shovel. At night when he opened the door every few minutes to stoke, the fire's reflection could be seen on the smoke long before the noise of the on-coming train could be heard. Those were the days before the advent of the air brake, when the brakeman had to travel the cat walk on top of cars in all kinds of weather to set the hand brakes for stopping the train, then release them again before it could be started. The brakes were controlled by twisting a wheel at the end of each car. The wheel turned a steel shaft with a sprocket and dog at foot level and extended to the bottom to wind a chain around it to tighten or release the brake on the car wheels.

The jerking operation of starting or stopping the train subjected the little wooden box cars to severe strain, sometimes opening a crack between the wall and floor or shifting the inside grain door, allowing some of the contents to spill out on the ground or be sprinkled for miles along the track. This was particularly so in the fall when the cars were loaded with wheat from the prairies. The sprinkled wheat along the track was a benefit to the prairie chickens for it caused them to follow the trail for winter feed until they were here in large flocks.

The buildings on the farm about two miles west of Dryden where we lived, were at that time located at the south end of the property. It was almost as near to go south to the railroad as north to the road and we often could get a ride to the village as there was a heavy grade a half mile west of the farm where the little engines usually stalled if heavily loaded. If this happened the crew were obligated to cut the train, take half of it into Dryden and place

it on the siding, then fill the tender with water and return for the remainder.

The time required to do this gave us a chance to take off for a ride when we heard the engine laboring and slowly puffing to a stop. The crew were very obliging and it was not too hard to obtain a ride. I know of a young lady living east of Eagle River, who when she wished to go into the store, would place a pail of buttermilk on the fence post. The engineer, seeing the pail would stop the train, the crew drank the buttermilk, then with the girl aboard would continue on to the station.

DOUBLE TRACKING THE C.P.R. BEGINS

Steam shovel at work, 1905, 1½ miles west of Dryden.

One morning in the spring of 1905 we were much surprised to hear a noise of a different kind over on the grade. Investigating we saw a train of flat cars standing on the track and a steam shovel at work, at a lower level, loading them with earth, to reduce the grade and prepare for a double track. The rapid growth of farming in the Western Provinces causing an increase in volume of wheat to be transported in the fall, was too big a task for the single line and the small engines to handle.

Double tracking was a big problem. Rock had to be drilled by the old fashioned method of hand hammer on steel to prepare for blasting. Months were required for a job that now can be done in days. Muskegs had to be drained and reinforced by balast to carry heavier loads, and wider and stronger bridges built. A new water

tank at Dryden had to be built on the south side of the track to replace the old one on the north which was in the way.

Preparing the muskegs for the new roadbed and heavier equipment was a discouraging task, where trouble never seemed to end. First the natural drainage had to be made wider and deeper for miles back from the track to their outlet so that the water level would be lowered. Then a layer of heavy logs were placed side by side over the entire length of the swamp and width of the new track to support and make a foundation for the fill.

Farmers filling sink hole west of Oxdrift.

There were three particularly bad muskegs in this area. One east of Dryden and two at Oxdrift, one just west of the station known as the sink hole, drained by Moose Creek, and the other about a mile east. Train load after train load of balast was dumped on them, the weight of the fill causing the logs to settle down and forcing the black soil and muck up on either side like a beaver dam.

When the swamp east of Oxdrift was thought to be about complete, a trainload of ballast pulled out on it and the whole road bed settled down about four feet, pushing and upending the foundation logs some distance out from the track. To get the train unloaded and up out of the hole, required some skillful manoeuvering.

The placing of heavy steel girders for the new bridge over the Wabigoon River at Dryden required two heavy cranes, one on either side of the river, to lift them off the flat cars and lower them down on the stone abutment.

Webster's headquarters on G.T.P., 1908. J. E. Gibson, 3rd from left.

BUILDING THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC

When the Grand Trunk Pacific Co., in 1908, undertook to build a railroad through the wild north country of rocks, lakes and muskegs, it was even worse and more rough than that through which the C.P.R. was built. The construction put the company so deeply in the red that the Dominion Government took over their assets under the name of the Canadian National, to complete the job.

The only time of the year in which supplies and equipment could be taken to the construction work was winter, on trails cut through the bush and when the lakes and muskegs were frozen. To get sufficient supplies, food for workmen, feed for horses and equipment moved in during the winter to tide the construction through the summer, required a huge amount of storage space at camp headquarters. There were no heavy trucks or crawler-tractors in 1906 and the only way to carry supplies from points along the C.P.R. to where they were required was by use of horse-drawn equipment which created a demand for settlers with teams.

There were two routes or trails cut from Dryden north to the construction. One led to Webster's camp where Richan is now located and the other north-east over lakes and muskegs to Swan Swanson's, about halfway between Sioux Lookout and Richan. A halfway stop, with cook camp for teamsters and stable for horses, was constructed on the route to Webster's.

This was a two-day trip, staying at the construction camp over night and returning the next.

Highway Booster

Mr. Pitt, a long time resident, an author of a column in the Observer, under the captions of A.P., the Columnist, and Friendly Critic, conceived the idea in 1919 to discuss the promotion of a highway from Winnipeg to the Head of the Lakes and the hope that it might be extended across the continent to make an all Canada highway from ocean to ocean.

Dignitaries from Toronto, Port Arthur, Fort William, Kenora and Winnipeg came to Dryden at the invitation of the Mayor. The idea was received with enthusiasm and the meeting organized itself as the Central Canada Colonization and Highway Association with Alfred Pitt as the first president.

Mr. Pitt was an ardent highway booster and spent considerable time and much of his own money in travel, organizing meetings in many centers. For the next 10 years a flood of propaganda flowed across the Dominion with little result until the depression of 1929 hit the country causing a demand for a great Government undertaking to provide work for thousands of unemployed. The persevering efforts of a devoted man had an astounding result. The idea of an all Canadian Highway was ready to hand. The Bennett Government adopted the Trans-Canada scheme as a gift from the Gods.

An agreement between Department of Highways of Manitoba and Ontario to meet at the boundary gave the highway from Kenora a boost. This portion was opened on Labor Day, Sept. 7, 1931. Great plans were made for the event in Kenora, anticipating 3,000 cars and 10,000 people.

The highway link from Vermilion to Kenora was the next objective, then on to the Twin Cities. Young men were greatly in need of work, and spent time in what were called Slave Camps, the government paying them $5. per month and board. There were several years of rough going over the coarse gravel and big stones, before the missing links were completed.

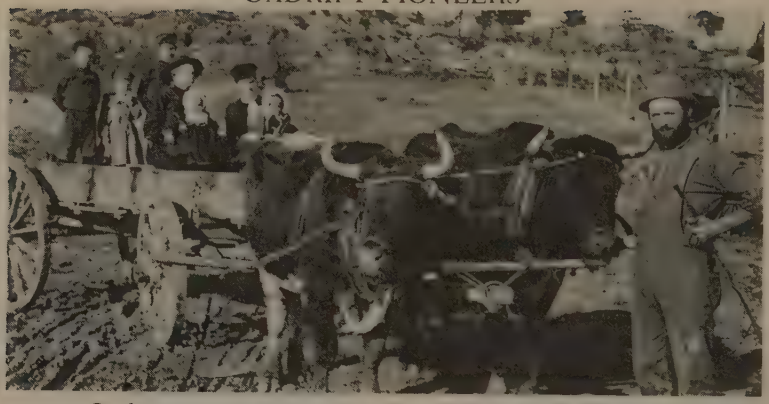
PIONEER DAYS AT OXDRIFT

The settlements around Oxdrift and at Dryden began at the same time, in 1896-97, as many of the farmers came from eastern Ontario and had been neighbors. The Government road from Dryden to Oxdrift then north to the Wabigoon River, built in 1898 was not much more than a winding trail cut through the bush, detouring around muskegs and low wet ground or around steep or rocky hills, hardly worthy of the name road, and a trip over the trail in a heavy wagon was a real boneshaker. Straightening the road across muskegs and cutting logs to lie side by side for corduroy was not done until several years later. How some of those settlers moved out on the land in '97, where there was not even a road, is a mystery.

On top of the hill, south of Moose Creek, after the road was built north to the Wabigoon River, the settlers built the old log school and community center of those early days. Church and Sunday School was held there every week, alternating between a Presbyterian and Methodist service. Nearly every family in the settlement attended regularly, either by walking or in the family conveyance; the heavy, smooth-riding, double wagon without springs. Concerts given by local talent, community gatherings, picnics and sports were held on the grounds.

We lived 4 miles north of Oxdrift from '98 to 1900. The land was covered with large pine or poplar stubs and stumps, and littered with wind blown timber, the result of the "Big Burn". The fallen timber was hard and dry, and axe or saw made little impression on it, but did it ever make a fire! The pitch in the burned and blackened pine would make the whole top of Mother's stove red and finally warped it out of shape.

Those stubs dotted like sentinels over the property, with broken-over tops still hanging to some of them, made a dreary-looking landscape in winter but they were the only source of revenue to keep the wolf from the door. Chopping or sawing them into four foot lengths for cordwood was hard work. Some of the wood had to be swamped from the piles to the road and unloaded so that the amount which a team could pull from the stump could be made up to a 1½ or 2 cord load to be hauled 4 miles to Oxdrift. The wood was unloaded at the spur to await the accumulation there of 10 or 12 cords, the amount of a car load, then picked up, thrown in the car and piled again. Thus the wood was cut, hauled and handled six times over, all for the sum of $1.75 per cord or almost the price of a hundred weight of flour, then selling at $2.00 to $2.25.



Oxdrift Blacksmith, 1899. Jas. Latimer & Family.

Pioneer's picnic, at old Oxdrift School House, 1900.

John Latimer's homestead, 1903. Robt. Latimer holding horses.

Early Barn Raisings prove settlers faith in new settlement.

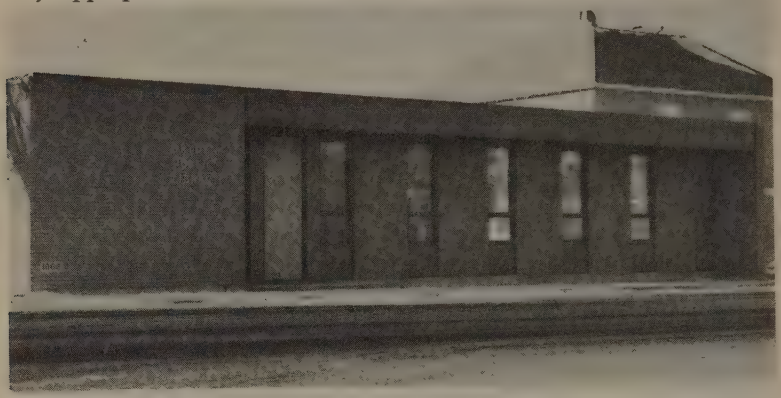
Robt. Skene's barn raising, 1904. Size 36' x 48' x 14' posts.

Jno. Hutchison's barn raising, 1905. Size 46' x 56' x 20' posts.

Ezra Wice's barn raising, 1908. Size 46' x 60' x 20' posts.

LIBRARY BUILDING
LIBRARY BUILDING A CENTENNIAL PROJECT

Sixty five years a wanderer, pushed from pillar to post when necessity forced a move. The thought to make a new building to house the Dryden Public Library a Centennial Project, was a wise one, and Brian Crawley, a former Dryden boy, chosen as architect, very appropriate.



1966 Dryden Public Library, designed by Brian Crawley, Architect.

Space in the remodelled old Van Horne Municipal building is at a premium, 20,000 books are on the shelves in it and more room required for new publications and accommodation for the reading public.

A motion in the Minute Book of Van Horne Council, dated December 15, 1900, that a grant of $25.00 be made to the library, is now the only clue as to when the library started. After sweeping the dust and cobwebs out of the nooks of memory, Mrs. Wice and I recalled seeing books on shelves of the living room adjoining the corner that was Dryden's first Post Office located on Queen St. on the present location of Wilson's Store. Mrs. David Smith, postmistress, was librarian. The small honorarium assisting the economy of the widow with six small girls to feed and clothe.

In 1925 the library was given the first push-out by necessity, to the little room in the north-west corner of the old Royal Bank building, when the post office was moved to the Gordon Bros. bank building, (now Gordon Reid's barber shop). In that small room the members of the Library Board alternated as librarian. The small stock of books were bolstered by those shipped in boxes from the Government Lending Library, Toronto, loaned for a short reading period, then packed and returned for another assortment.

It was in 1925 that the membership fee of 25c per year for town and $1.00 for non-residents was set, that policy is still in effect. Government assistance grant received in that year was $100. For 1965 it was $1100. The library was open only two evenings per week. Now members may exchange books Monday and Tuesday 7-9 p.m., Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 3-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. and on Saturday 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

More room and shelving space forced the next move to Mrs. Dan Hutchison's residence on Queen St. Her living room was shelved by the late Jas. McFadyen. When she resigned as librarian in 1946 the books were moved to the most inconvenient and crowded place of all, the ladies cloak room, upstairs to a landing in the Paper Mill Hall. After the Town of Dryden and part of the Municipality of Van Horne were amalgamated in 1953, the municipal building was remodelled and the old council chambers became its present home.

YEARS OF LIBRARIAN'S SERVICE

Mrs. David Smith, 1901-?; Board members 1925, Mona Morris, Jan. to Oct. 1926; Mr. Rigbey, Oct. 1926 to Aug. 1928; Mrs. Dan Hutchison, Aug. 1928 to 1946; Mrs. Robt. Sweeney, April 1946 to 1953; Mrs. Vera Lott, June 1953 to 1966; Mrs. Edna Waite appointed 1966 after 2 years service. Mrs. Irene Tew has served 12 years as assistant and Mr. A. McIntyre many years as secretary and chairman of the Board.

DRYDEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Dryden Agricultural Society was organized in 1907 and the first fair was held that fall. No early minutes are available, so in confirmation of that date, a motion in Van Horne Council minute book June 15, 1907, states that a grant of $25. be given to the Agricultural Society if a fair is held in the fall. Andrew Hutchison was first preseident, followed by Dr. Blair.

Nov. 10, 1910 the Government donated 10 acres on the southeast corner of the experimental farm for exhibition purposes. Albert Browing's name appears on the deed. Before the Society had a building of their own in the old Coulter building, upstairs above the Fire Hall, the old Curling Rink and Self's Hall adjoining the Dryden House were used.

Dryden has taken three generations to be "carved" from a hamlet "in the wilderness" to a fast-growing modern town of 6,676 people. Slow growth in the beginning was speeded by the expansion of the Dryden Paper Company which now has a $50,000,000 plant. Other major industries are the $500,000 St. Regis Consolidated Packing Co. Ltd. and the $250,000 Alex Wilson Publications. These three companies employ approximately 1700 people and have an annual payroll of $9,300,000.

The Town owns and operates its own Hydro and Telephone services. Fire protection is provided by an excellent volunteer Fire Department. Two large super-markets and a variety of other stores give shopping facilities on a par with much larger centers.

Good road and rail connections with other parts of the country are provided by the Trans-Canada Highway and C.P.R. Each year a large number of tourists are attracted by the hunting, fishing and scenic beauties of the area. The Tourist Bureau is very active in providing these visitors with a welcome and information on the district. The new Museum is proving a popular link with the communities past.

"Why should we when the present is so rose-colored, the future so blissful, turn to rake in the ashes of the past." Perhaps, because like Lot's wife, we are all prone to stare backward. Who lives in the present? Do you? When we are young, we pant for the future, that pitches painted tents before us. When we are older we live in the past, that wraps itself in a sacred gilding glamour, and is vocal with happy echoes which alone survive. Far-off fields before and behind us are so dewy, so vividly green, and the present is so gray, stony, and barren of charm that we turn fretfully.

It is part of the grim tyranny of Time that it is tideless; that the stream bears remorsely on and on, never back to the dear old spots, always on, to lose itself in the eternal and unknown. So today lacks the zest of its predecessors. "Thy yesterday is thy past; Thy today is thy future; Thy tomorrow is a secret."

FROM AN OLD CLOCK IN CHESTER ENGLAND

When as a child I laughed and wept,	Time crept,
When as a youth I dreamed and talked,	Time walked,
When I became a full grown man,	Time ran,
And later as I older grew,	Time flew,
Soon I shall find while travelling on,	Time gone.

CARVED
FROM
THE
WILDERNESS
the intriguing
story of
DRYDEN

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